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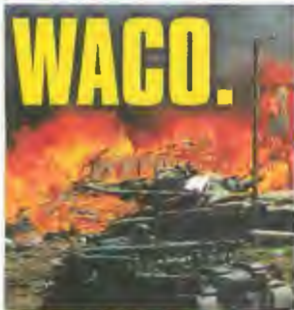
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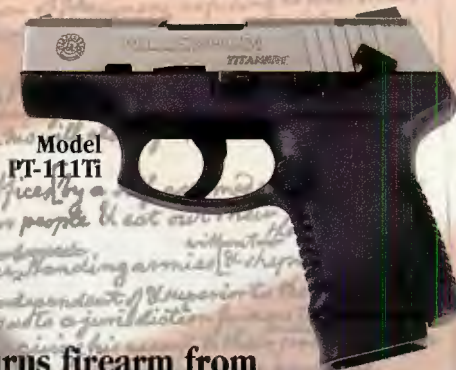
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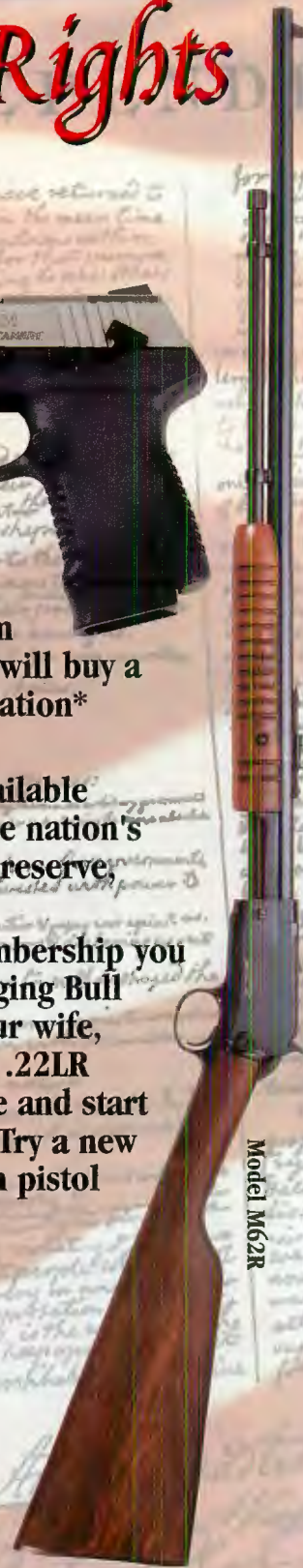


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Inset: Alan Diaz/AP/Wide World Photos
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On the Cover

"... fisherman Donato Dalrymple holds 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez inside the bedroom of Lazaro Gonzalez during the pre-dawn hours Saturday, April 22, 2000, as Border Patrol agents stormed the Miami home to seize custody of the boy." See story, page 62.



Mark H. Milstein



Dr. Tom Marks



Al J. Venter

COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Major John Plaster, USA (Ret.)

The War We Could Have Won

A former U.S. peace activist asked a retired North Vietnamese officer: "Was there anything the Americans could have done to prevent your victory?"

Having opposed U.S. policy and assumed a communist victory practically written in the stars, the American expected his host to declare that nothing could have stopped the inevitable North Vietnamese triumph. Instead, as recounted in Richard Schultz' book *The Secret War Against Hanoi*, Col. Bui Tin, the very officer who had accepted the surrender of the South Vietnamese government in 1975, replied matter-of-factly, "Cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail."

Hardly startling news to those of us secretly gathering intelligence in Laos during the Vietnam War. As Green Berets in the top secret Studies and Observations Group (SOG), we correctly saw the Trail — a network of Laotian highways — as the vital lifeline connecting the battlefields of South Vietnam with Hanoi's very ability to make war.

The 122mm rockets that pounded Marines at Khe Sanh came down the Trail. The North Vietnamese regiments that fought at Hamburger Hill all traveled down the trail.

Recognizing it as key to victory, the North Vietnamese had begun constructing their secret Laotian infrastructure more than five years before the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident.

North Vietnamese engineers and logisticians built an infrastructure that mirrored the American one in South Vietnam, complete with hundreds of miles of highways, command and communications centers, munitions dumps, food stockpiles, truck parts, petroleum pipelines and troop bivouacs, enough to sustain a field army — and all beyond range of American artillery.

At a cost of nearly 300 U.S. Special Forces SOG men killed or missing detailed intelligence documenting North Vietnamese activities made its way to Washington. But what was so obvious to Col. Bui seemed lost at the State Department and White House; the Johnson Administration

chose to say almost nothing of Laos, fostering a distorted image of peasant insurgents pushing bicycles, when the Trail's reality was thousands of modern trucks rolling along well-kept highways.

General Westmoreland privately advocated a drive straight across the narrow waist of Laos, to create an impassable DMZ, as decisive a stroke as MacArthur's landing at Inchon in 1950, which had cut off the invading North Koreans. There was never a question of legality. The Hague Convention of 1907 required Laos and Cambodia to eject the North Vietnamese and close borders to their passage, or the injured party (the United States) could do it for them.

U.S. policy makers chose not only to do nothing but even downplay or deny North Vietnamese violations of neutral Cambodia and Laos. It was as if in World War II, 10 Nazi divisions had attacked Patton's Third Army from Switzerland, then — before a counterattack could be launched — had fled back across the border — and the United States not only let them escape, but said nothing for fear of offending the Swiss.

When Lt. Gen. Stanley "Swede" Larsen informed reporters in 1966 the North Vietnamese units were operating from Cambodian sanctuaries, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara publicly declared the evidence insufficient. Reporters went back to Larsen for clarification, but all the chagrined officer could do was smile and announce, "I stand corrected."

For those of us in SOG secretly witnessing a truth so at odds with media reporting and government pronouncements — well, defeat seemed ominously certain.

It was not swarms of Viet Cong guerrillas that stormed into Saigon that infamous April morning 25 years ago, but columns of Russian T-54 tanks, leading a modern field army — all of which had traveled on Laotian highways and bases. Had the Ho Chi Minh Trail been cut, they could not have passed.

The Vietnam War, even Hanoi's strategists know, could have been won by the United States. ✘

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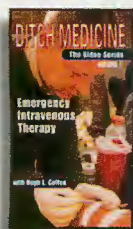
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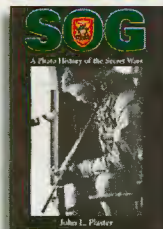
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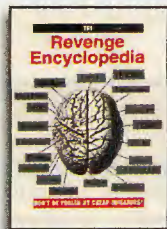
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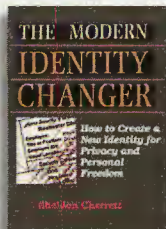
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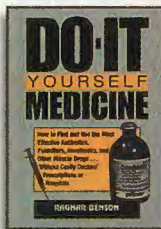
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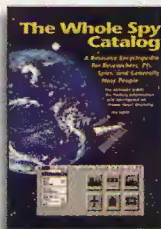
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Toys From Tots

Winner of this month's "Duh-Uh, Where Will It Ever End?" contest goes to Annapolis, Maryland, city alderwoman Cynthia A. Carter for her proposal that Annapolis initiate a program to buy back water pistols, cap guns, and other toy weapons to staunch "violent behavior" among children. We're not making this up.

The first-term Democrat said that children "can't distinguish between a real gun or a play gun," adding that she would eventually like to make all toy guns illegal ... but in the mean time said she would seek city monies or private funds to start the toy gun buy-back program.

Steve Dasbach, national director of the Libertarian Party, pon-



Right on target: from left, Dave Baskin (chairman, NRA Disabled Shooting Services), Mike Wheaton (sports director, Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association) and Coleman Kearsce celebrate the EPVA's entry into the NRA-Beeman Championship, in a ceremony at the Bronx, New York, Veterans Medical Center. The NRA-Beeman Grand Prix Championship tours some 15 cities, taking the shooting sports to the disabled who are confined to the immediate vicinity of their respective medical centers.

dered where this kind of foolishness would lead. For instance, if Carter's toy gun buy-back program is considered successful, might it lead to an attempt to prevent urban sprawl by buying back Lego bricks? Preventing deforestation by buying back Lincoln Logs? Preventing burglaries by buying back Barbie's Dream House? Preventing traffic accidents by buying back Hot Wheels?

We would like to propose a Daft Politician Buy-Back Program, in which, for a reasonable fee, of course, when citizens discover they have placed in office a politico who is so daft, crooked, or downright out of touch with reality they cannot do their job, the citizens would have the right to buy back the office.

Dasbach also noted, "this month a school in New Jersey suspended two kindergarten students after they played cops-and-robbers on the playground, pointed their finger at each other like guns and shouted 'bang, bang!' ... Which brave politician will be the first to propose a finger buy-back program?"

Well. They can have my finger when they pry my cold, dead guns from around it!

Waco Investigator Found Dead

Carlos Ghigliotti, a 42-year-old expert in thermal imaging and video tape who had been retained by a U.S. House committee in the investigation of the 1993 Waco tragedy, has been found dead in his home and office in Laurel, Maryland.

Laurel police spokesman Jim Collins told reporters, "we're investigating this as a homicide." There were no signs of a break-in or struggle.

Ghigliotti had testified before the House Reform Committee last October that his analysis of the FLIR tapes taken at Waco indicated that an FBI agent fired shots at the compound on April 19, the final day of the 1993 siege. This conclusion has been disputed by the FBI.

Lead lawyer in a \$100 million wrongful death suit coming out of the Waco siege, Michael Caddell, told reporters at the time of Ghigliotti's death, that he had recently discussed Ghigliotti's conclusions with him, and had intended to retain him as an expert witness — because his work impressed him, and his first expert had suffered a stroke.

Attaboy, Taurus

On the heels of the "business decision" on the part of S&W to cave to anti-gun lawyers, comes the refreshing news that Taurus is buying a free NRA membership for every purchaser of a Taurus handgun. Taurus supports your gun rights — be sure to support Taurus when considering your next quality handgun purchase.

2000 Gun Rights Policy Conference

Meet with national gun rights leaders and fellow grassroots activists at the 15th Annual Gun Rights Policy Conference (GRPC 2000) in Washington, D.C. this 29 and 30 September, and 1 October.

This year's agenda will examine crucial issues such as youth violence, "smart" guns, city lawsuits, concealed carry legislation, legal and medical scholarship, and what's happening in the federal, state and local arenas — plus the 2000 elections.

For updates, check www.saf.org, or www.ccrkba.org on the web. Further information is available online, or by writing 2000 GRPC, 12500 NE Tenth Place, Bellevue, WA 98005; phone: 425-454-4911; fax: 425-451-3959. Sponsored by the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms and the Second Amendment Foundation, the conference, hundreds of dollars worth of materials, and a luncheon are free. Travel, lodging and other meals are the responsibility of conferees; a special \$99 room rate is available from the Crystal City Marriott (call 800-228-9290 and mention GRPC 2000).

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Continued on page 10

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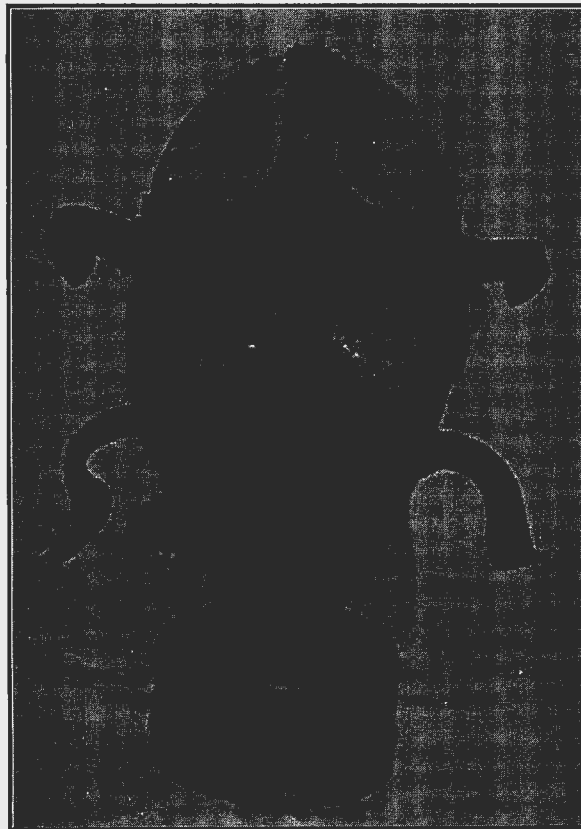
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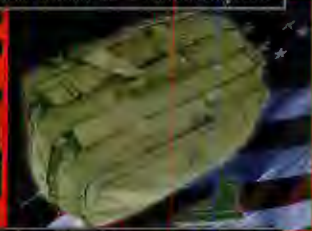
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*Master Guy Savelli has been tested at Duke University, the Mind Science Foundation, JFK University, The Psychological Research Institute and The Special Forces Laboratory at Fort Bragg.

HK **RECALL NOTICE • HK USC AND UMP** **HK**

Heckler and Koch, Inc. is voluntarily recalling USC (.45 ACP) carbines and UMP (.45 ACP) submachine guns due to reported breakage of the cocking lever. All of the recalled firearms will be fitted with a newly designed cocking lever (operating handle) by HK's technical department at no charge.

Serial number range affected by this recall:
USC Carbine (.45 ACP) 47-000102 through 47-002600
UMP Submachine Gun (.45 ACP) 163-001001 through 163-001200

Current USC carbines and UMP submachine guns on order will be refitted with the new cocking lever prior to shipment.

HK is recommending that USCs and UMPs covered by this recall not be used until the new cocking lever is installed. Owners and users are requested to contact HK at (703) 450-1900, ext. 226 to arrange shipment to Heckler & Koch for installation of the new cocking lever.

Global LLC has gone partners with DoD to sell some \$10 billion (acquisition cost) of surplus G.I. equipment — and they're doing it on-line. The test internet auction last April of electronic test equipment and heavy machine tools at Redstone Arsenal was a crashing success. Another sale at McClellan AFB in Sacramento is going on while we write this.

Interested buyers can get sale and product information at www.levylatham.com, or www.surplusbid.com. Further information is available from Earl Bray, President, phone: 480-367-1100; fax: 480-367-1200; or by e-mail to ebray@levylatham.com.

Alliant To Make G.I. Rounds

Alliant Technologies, makers of such popular smokeless powders as Bullseye, Unique, 2400 and the Reloader series, has won a \$105 million contract to produce 5.56, 7.62 and 12.7mm ammo for the Army. Alliant also recently was awarded contracts to supply the U.S. and NATO allies with \$100 million worth of small-arms and medium-caliber ammo, rocket propellant and warhead subassemblies.

G.I.s to Guatemala

The Guatemalan congress has approved the deployment of 40 American military personnel, to join Guatemalan agents in counter-narcotics ops.

Four Against 50

Put these four heads together and you can bet something really silly is about to happen: Rep. Rod Blagojevich (D-IL), Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA), Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA), and Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). This time, they are after what are probably the best-behaved firearms available, judging from the fact they virtually never are used in a crime — the .50 BMG rifles.

These never-appear-on-a-police-blotter rifles are claimed by these Chicken-Little legislators to "present a serious and substantial threat to the national security." These sponsors of HR2127 (S1774) also claim the .50 rifles are "neither designed nor used in any significant number for legitimate sporting or hunting purposes." Aside from that the Second Amendment has not a thing to do with "sporting" purposes, Wrong Again. Chalk that one up to ignorance, considering the sources. Their rationale for HR2127 also includes the reference to the "virtually unrestricted availability of these firearms and ammunition ..." That's not merely wrong, they have to know better — and it's hard to find a term to accurately describe someone who states as fact something they know is not true, except either a "Clinton" or a "liar."

Returning to the ignorant assertion that .50 BMG rifles are not "used in any significant number for legitimate sporting ... purposes,"

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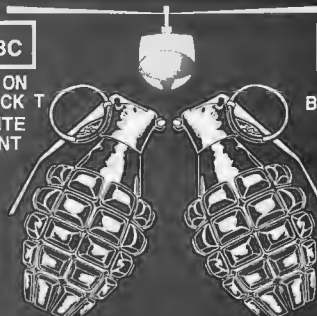


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the thousands of members of the Fifty Caliber Shooters Association have created the Fifty Caliber Shooters Policy Institute (FCSPI), an NRA/ILA type of organization designed to educate Congress as to the facts of the matter, and stem the ill-advised efforts of Feeble-minded Four mentioned above.

Any lobbying effort takes funds, and to raise these funds, the FCSPI is having a fund-raiser with — what else — a .50 Ma Deuce heavy barrel as the drawing prize. Belt-fed, of course, and strictly semi-auto, complete with M3 tripod, manual, extra projectiles, ATF approval letter. The prize has been donated by TNW, Inc., Box 311 Vernonia, OR 97064. Donations are \$25, and you need not be present to win. You also do not need to donate to participate.

Further details are available from FCSPI at 909-653-5447 or 435-527-9245; or on the FCSPI web page: www.50cal-policy.org.

Chem-Suit Criminals Sentenced

Five officials of the now-bankrupt Isratex Corporation copped a plea to lesser charges and have been sentenced in the case of bilking the Pentagon and endangering G.I.s with the faulty production of chem/bio protective suits, and conspiring to hide the fact the suits were faulty. Some 140,000 had to be pulled from military stocks.

Isratex Corporation was given three years probation and fined \$266,825, the Puerto Rican subsidiary was fined \$96,000. Company president Abe Brin, having already spent several months in jail, was fined \$4,000 and must pay \$195,000 restitution; his brother Yehuda Yoav Brin got six months and a \$40,000 fine; Zvi Rosenthal, former production manager, got six months home-time and was fined \$20,000. Lesser officials got lesser sentences.

The 140,000 potentially defective suits have been pulled from Army and Air Force stocks. The suits represent only a fraction of the some four million such suits under DoD control, and the ones withdrawn from service will no doubt be used for training.

Army To Try E-Recruiting

Hard-pressed between a declining enlistment curve and tighter budgets for recruiting efforts, Army Secretary Louis Caldera is championing an approach that has worked well for corporate America: e-recruiting. Some highlights of Caldera's new recruiting strategy through cyberspace include interactive web sites (exciting simulation games, virtual tours of posts and choppers). In addition the Army is hiring a new ad agency, conducting a new ad campaign, and will have new media buying strategies that make heavy use of banner ads, e-mails and pop-ups, in addition to buying cheaper, more targeted ads on cable TV, syndication and spot media. DoD asked for some \$700 million for recruiting; the House decided \$200 million would be adequate. ☒

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FREEDOM WATCH

Tyranny of the Left

Free speech? Not in the United States, if you support the Second Amendment and want to speak at the prestigious Brandeis University.

When student organizers set out to bring legendary actor and NRA President Charleton Heston to campus, the university administration set out to make it an expensive, cumbersome endeavor. Citing Heston's "controversial views," university officials established a special set of security regulations that have never been required for any other speaker at the campus.

Special requirements for Heston's 28 March speech included a bomb-sniffing dog, two full-body metal detectors, two handheld metal detectors, at least 10 security guards and four units of Heston's blood type. In all, the special provisions for Heston's speech cost the event's sponsor an additional \$6,000.

Seasoned security specialists, and Heston's publicists have characterized the extra security measures as ridiculous.

By ordering such extreme and absurd security precautions, university officials accomplished three things: They (1) made it an expensive endeavor to bring in politically incorrect speakers; (2) created the illusion that Heston's fans are reckless, dangerous bomb-toting thugs, and (3) openly defied the spirit of the First and Second Amendments to the United States Constitution.

Persecuted Veteran

Harold Hughes is a decorated veteran of the U.S. Army, who served with the Army Rangers in Vietnam. Until recently, he'd had no run-ins with the law.

"He's never committed a violent act in his life outside the Army," says his brother, Curtis.

Lately, Hughes told a newspaper in Paintsville, Ky., his successful war career has been nothing but a hindrance. Police and the courts, Hughes claims, have decided his war record makes him a "violent killer" to be carefully watched.

It might seem like a hollow conspiracy theory, except that one recent arrest supports it. A local judge accused Hughes of making an obscene gesture toward him as the two met in traffic in downtown Paintsville. The judge issued a contempt of court order against Hughes and sent out the Kentucky State Police Special Response Team—a SWAT unit—to arrest him. The SWAT unit pulled up with a fire truck, an ambulance and lots of cop cars.

Hughes, fearing for his life, hid from the SWAT team in the hills behind his home for one night before turning himself in. At a hearing that day, his daughter took the stand and took full credit for making an obscene gesture toward the judge.

The judge testified he was "absolutely confident" that Mr. Hughes, not his daughter, made the obscene gesture. Then Hughes brought out his trump card. The morning of the obscene gesture, he was in jail. Records from the jail proved his claim beyond any doubt, and the contempt charge was thrown out.

He'd been in jail on charges stemming from a domestic squabble with his estranged wife, who he has since divorced.

During an argument, when his wife was several hundred yards away in a barn, Hughes fired a weapon into the ground. He was charged with first-degree wanton endangerment and arrested attack style by the Special Response Team.

Hughes told his hometown paper that he's never committed a violent act outside of war, and wants to clear the air about his newfound image as a violent man.

"I just want to live in peace," Hughes said. "I have a horseback trail-riding business that is really taking off, if they'd just leave me alone. Right now I'm afraid to come to town without someone with me."

Clearly Hughes should never have fired a weapon, into the ground or in any direction, during a domestic dispute. For doing so, he deserves to pay the consequences. However, the criminal justice system has no just cause to consider Hughes a dangerous violent killer just because he served his country in Vietnam. We doubt SWAT teams are used to bring in others in Kentucky who are charged with flipping off a judge.

The attack-style arrests of Hughes reflect a growing and frightening trend in America to view war veterans — especially those with guns — as rogue, dangerous elements of society. Most, of course, are the antithesis of that hateful, inaccurate stereotype. Combat veterans risked their lives in defense of freedom. That takes kindness and compassion toward ones fellow man, not a reckless desire to maim and kill.

How to Be Gay

A University of Michigan professor will likely find precious little resistance from fellow faculty to his newest course: "How to Be Gay: Male Homosexuality and Initiation."

That's because the academic world has spent the past two decades embracing and promoting alternative lifestyles, while shutting down expressions of traditional cultural values with speech codes disguised as anti-harassment policies.

Meanwhile, Professor Jon Reisman at the University of Maine is starting a new course that's certain to outrage his peers. It's called: "Political Correctness in America."

Reisman, a tenured economics and government professor, calls himself the most "politically incorrect" instructor at the university. He intends to use his course to teach students how the politically correct atmosphere on college campuses, in the media and the public sector goes all the way back to the Salem witch hunts. Students will study the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Bill of Rights, abolition and temperance movements, McCarthyism and drug policy.

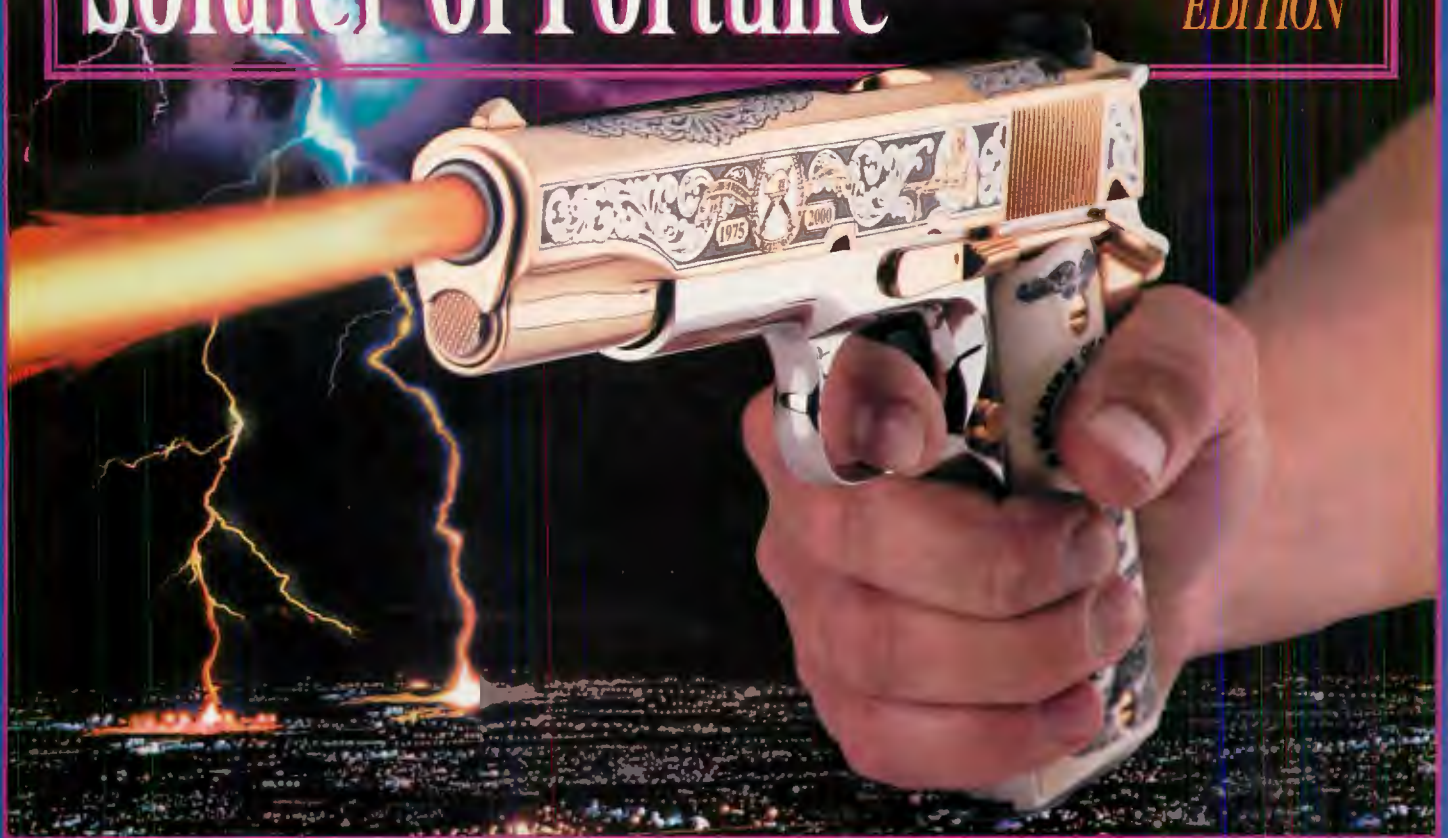
"You've got a very dedicated group of faculty members — I call it the democracy Politburo — the equal opportunity officers, the women's studies, peace studies, Marxist-studies groups, and they have a mindset," Reisman told the *Washington Times*. "But their method of doing it involves imposing a certain code of behavior, speech and action on others."

Reisman says his class will be the first of its kind in the country, and he hopes it catches on.

"I don't expect untenured faculty members to do this," he said. "But we tenured faculty members have to. We won't have a free society if we don't." ❧

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I Was There

Text & Photos by Norbert Schiller

All Quiet On The Tsorona Front

The road winding down from Asmara, in Eritrea's highlands, hasn't changed much in a year. There is less traffic, and what you see is mostly civilian. The local nomads have become more relaxed, leaving their herds to cross the road, with little worry of them being crushed by military vehicles racing to the front. The military checkpoints have almost all disappeared, along with the columns of trucks carrying troops. If I hadn't traveled this route one year before, I would have never guessed that I was less than an hour's drive from one of Africa's bloodiest battlefields.

Eritrea and Ethiopia have been at war for more than two years over what is technically called a border dispute. However, since the spring of 1999 there has been very little cross-border fighting, only the occasional skirmish, the last being in February of this year. The international community, most notably the Americans, the Europeans and the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.), have stepped up their efforts to find a solution. A number of peace packages have been put forward, but according to Eritrea's president, Isayas Afworke, Ethiopia's leadership has flatly rejected all of them. "Much hope has been put on what the international community could do to bring about peace," Afworke asserted in an interview. "We have waited for almost six months now, and we were told that they [the international community] are still trying to persuade the other side to accept the peace package ... all roads that lead to demarcation or arbitration [to solve the border dispute] are not acceptable to the other side.

The day I was invited to go to the front coincided with market day in many of the small villages I passed. Soldiers were out leisurely shopping for goods and sitting in small roadside cafes, chatting with friends. A year ago, many of these same villages were deserted, and the only sound that could be heard was that of steel tank treads rumbling over rocks and dirt on their way to battle. In one of these villages, children carried on playing in a school yard despite being so close to the front lines.

As soon as I entered the third grade classroom of Yordanos Kiflemariam, age 20, the entire class of 30 pupils stood up speechless. The kids were incredibly disciplined and nobody spoke out of turn as the teacher continued with her lecture. Yordanos, a science teacher, has seen her fair share of battle. She served for two years

on the Mereb Setit front. Now that the fighting has stopped, she has been pulled back as part of a military-sponsored program to get highly trained soldiers teaching kids in rural classrooms.

Across the dusty sports field, Hagosa Ghebrezghi, 23, is teaching mothers, some old enough to be her own, in an adult education program, also sponsored in part by the military. The mothers, some with small babies clinging to them, pay close attention to the teacher. Hagosa spent two years in Badme, which saw some of the war's worst fighting.

Eritrea's road to independence has not been an easy one. For 30 years the Eritrean resistance fought to free themselves from Ethiopia. "I can tell you about the experience of the population of this country from 1961 to 1991," Afworke said. "We were 3 million [the same population as today]; we didn't have the resources. Mengistu had the biggest, most sophisticated army in black Africa with all the resources in his hands an air force of 170 aircraft and a 500,000-strong standing army. Never in Africa would you find all that might. Where is Mengistu now? Mengistu is in Zimbabwe [in exile]. We [the Eritreans] know how to survive."

Farther along the road, the Tsorona rift finally opens up, and in the distance you can see the high, jagged peaks of the Selambese mountain range across the border in Ethiopia. From here I am taken to a command post high on a hill overlooking the entire valley. A year ago, all I could see in this valley were exploding shells and columns of smoke rising from burning tanks and armored vehicles. Now, the columns of smoke have turned to dust — tractors plow the fertile fields. Since the inhabitants were forced to abandon their land for fear of an attack, the military has agreed to farm the land until the people can be repatriated safely. The Tsorona Valley is fed by the Mareb River, bordering both Eritrea and Ethiopia, and is known for being the best farm land in the region.

At the command post I am surprised to see the lack of military hardware. You might think that such



(above) The President of Eritrea, Isayas Afworke. "We are one population, one people. ... You can't defeat a population that is determined to defend its land." (right) Aida enjoying her coffee. Even warriors need a break. (left) Female military medic treats casualty in underground hospital.



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a strategic location, dominating the entire countryside, would be an ideal place to put the most sophisticated weaponry. However, that's what has made the Eritreans who they are; they never do what one expects. One of the soldiers present invited me into one of the huts for lunch. There, spread out before us was the traditional Eritrean (and Ethiopian) meal of *enjera* bread topped with rice, beans and spicy sauce.

After our meal, Aida Berhe, a stunning 21-year-old fighter who could easily grace the pages of any women's fashion magazine, invites me to an adjoining hut to partake in the *Buna* (coffee) ceremony with a nurse named Elsa. During the long course of preparing the coffee, I am amazed to think how Aida, with her gold earrings, long, painted fingernails, and an ambition to be an artist and fashion designer, could wind up a fighter on the rugged Tsorona front. Aida smiles a lot and jokes around with me and the other male combatants, but when it comes to defending her country she is deadly serious.

Aida and Elsa have spent their entire two-year stint as soldiers on the Tsorona front lines. Besides being in the same unit, they share something else, along with many other Eritreans. Both were born in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, to Eritrean parents, while the two countries were united. Their families only moved to Eritrea in 1994, after independence. Aida's three older sisters left Ethiopia when Aida was still a child, to study in Europe, and remain there to this day. Four years after arriving in Asmara, both women joined the army, to defend a country neither had much knowledge of.

What makes soldiers like Aida and Elsa so devoted to defending their homeland? "We are one population, one people," President Afworke emphasizes. "You can't defeat a population that is determined to defend its land."

Afworke is convinced Ethiopians' hearts are not in the war. Ethiopian troops, he says, had to be forced to the front to attack Eritrean positions. They were pushed by firing squads that stayed behind the lines. "That's how tens of thousands of their troops were killed in a matter of three days."

Tucked away in a canyon above Tsorona is one of the underground hospitals made famous by the Eritreans during their 30-year fight for independence. Inside, female doctors go about their routine check-ups. These days the patients are not suffering from battle wounds, but rather common sicknesses like dysentery, heat stroke or the flu. Surfacing from the hospital, I run into Aida who has driven to the dispensary to pick up some supplies. Surprised to see her again, I ask when she expects to be discharged from the military. She smiles, jumps back in the Landcruiser and says, "Elsa and I have requested to stay for another 18 months."

Norbert Schiller has worked as a photographer for Der Spiegel and Time, among others. His first article for SOF, "Eritrea At War," appeared in the March 2000 issue. ✕

ARE YOU BEING "BUGGED?"

WORLD'S BEST

Counter-Surveillance Device

EVEN AS YOU READ THIS, countless individuals and firms are being enormously damaged by having their private conversations overheard, monitored, and/or recorded. Almost without exception and AFTER the fact, the victims make a statement something along the lines of "But, I never thought it could happen to ME!"



THE ULTIMATE IN "BUG" DETECTION EQUIPMENT
"DEBUGS" ROOMS AND TELEPHONES!

If you require GUARANTEED PROTECTION against electronic telephone monitoring devices and COMPLETE CONFIDENTIAL PRIVACY in certain rooms and areas, we highly recommend the COUNTER-SURVEILLANCE DETECTOR CSD-18.

CSD-18

CONDUCT A PROFESSIONAL SEARCH...ANYTIME...ANYWHERE!



Every newspaper and magazine article and every radio and TV story discussing some new episode involving "bugging" devices, continues to increase the ever growing demand for electronic Counter-Surveillance "sweeps" and equipment. The very limited supply of competently trained and equipped Counter-Surveillance specialists has created a situation where "sweep" rates exceeding \$250 per hour are now considered reasonable and appropriate.

This is an exciting, immensely interesting and profitable field that you can enter with a minimum investment. Two hours actual practice with the CSD-18 will have you "reading" and "clearing" telephones and rooms with professional ease and competence. The average fee for "debugging" a single telephone is over \$200.00! It requires about 45 minutes to complete the job and once it gets around that YOU can provide this service, you'll quickly have more clients than you can handle. Even if you choose to provide "sweeps" for only a small number of friends and associates, your initial investment will quickly be returned many times over.

EXTREME SENSITIVITY!

This is our finest piece of detection equipment! The CSD-18 quickly locates electronic eavesdropping devices in telephones, homes, offices, vehicles, boats, or concealed on the body. It will actually pick up many eavesdropping transmitters at ranges up to 25 ft! Extreme sensitivity is obtained via ultra-efficient amplification circuitry directly following the RF detection stages. Excellent quality dynamic headphones exclude all external sounds to further enhance detector output.



FULL RANGE DYNAMIC HEADPHONES

Encompassing an extremely wide-band frequency coverage of under 1 Mhz to over 3 Ghz, the CSD-18 quickly "homes-in" on any eavesdropping transmitter and immediately pinpoints its location. The closer you get to the "bug", the further the needle moves to the right. It's as simple as that.

"FLASHING" LED WARNS YOU INSTANTLY!



And, for maximum telephone security, the CSD-18 automatically analyzes a pre-programmed series of electronic measurements along the telephone line and converts the analysis into an easy to follow, step by step, test procedure. No technical knowledge is required or necessary. A visual indication (via a flashing LED) immediately reveals the presence of the various types of telephone "taps" and the flashing sequence identifies the actual type of eavesdropping device.

DETECTS THE LATEST "SUPER-BUGS"

Exclusive GSS proprietary circuitry assures the utmost privacy protection possible today. The CSD-18 detects even the very latest ultra-sophisticated eavesdropping devices specifically designed to defeat detection, including sophisticated "Frequency Hoppers" and "Burst Bugs". Also includes multi-line option for testing business phones.

FREE WITH ORDER!

SUBMINIATURE "BODY WIRE" DETECTOR!

If you fear the possibility of being overheard and/or recorded during private conversations and require "silent" notification, we've also included our SBD-5 (regularly \$225) as a FREE GIFT! Only 3" x 2" x 1", this exciting new development in micro-miniaturization will instantly detect hidden body wires at ranges up to 10 ft and alert you via a silent vibration.



BIG MONEY OPPORTUNITIES!

Also, complete information describing the fantastic opportunities now open to trained Counter-Surveillance technicians and how a number of individuals are reaping a Bonanza in this booming business! You'll learn exactly how the ever increasing use of Electronic Listening Devices by investigative agencies, government agencies, jealous suitors and unscrupulous business competitors, etc. has created huge demand for this service.

FASCINATING HI-TECH INFORMATION PACKAGE!

A detailed analysis of a variety of extremely fascinating hi-tech devices and procedures used for ultra-sophisticated audio and video eavesdropping including micro-wave and laser device monitoring; new methods for listening thru walls; all about scramblers, voice changers and exactly how neighbors eavesdrop. How missing persons are found, confidential data banks are broken into, lie detectors deceived and much more!



A comprehensive information package JAM-PACKED FULL of some of the most exciting and fascinating reading imaginable. Reads like a James Bond novel, with one important exception...IT'S NOT FICTION!

THE ONE "BUG" TO FEAR MOST!

While most individuals are now somewhat guarded in their telephone conversations, they still rather naively feel secure in the "privacy" of their own home or office. However, the most common type of "tap" presently used by eavesdroppers now picks up ALL SOUNDS AND CONVERSATION WITHIN A ROOM ... WITH THE TELEPHONE STILL ON THE HOOK!

Due to this devastating capability, this "Infinity" tap (variously referred to as Infinity Transmitter, Hookswitch Bypass, 3rd Wire, Harmonica Bug, etc.) has become the "bug of choice".

In flagrant violation of federal law prohibiting their use and sale, these devices in various forms are openly advertised in many technical publications for as little as \$30. Literally thousands of these devices are now in the hands of unscrupulous individuals all over the country!

In response to this ever-growing threat, a uniquely engineered feature of the CSD-18 now also detects Infinity type devices anywhere "down the line".

In other words, if ANYONE ... ANYWHERE ... is utilizing the telephone tap and/or ring wires to monitor your private room conversations while your telephone is on the hook, you'll immediately be made aware of it via a flashing LED!

100% POSITIVE INDICATION

The CSD-18 also flawlessly detects "Series" and "Parallel" telephone transmitters and "Telephone Recording Devices". And, a separate feature silently indicates when extension phones are picked up or being used. The CSD-18 completely eliminates all doubt and guesswork.

EXCLUSIVE "LISTEN-IN" FEATURE!

The CSD-18 will even allow you to "listen-in" to exactly what the eavesdropper is surreptitiously monitoring. And, without the eavesdropper ever becoming aware that he has been detected! We are unaware of ANY other detection equipment having this combined capability AT ANY PRICE!

MAXIMUM PROTECTION

The CSD-18 detects and locates ALL major categories of surveillance equipment including:
TELEPHONE RECORDING DEVICES
ALL TYPES OF CONCEALED TRANSMITTERS
BUMPER BEEPER TRACKING DEVICES
ALL SERIES & PARALLEL PHONE TAPS
INFINITY, LASER, MICRO-WAVE TRANSMITTERS
including Video, Computer and Fax Transmitters

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Includes headphones, antenna/probe, all plugs and adapters, batteries, the Free SBD-5 & Info Packages.

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Dealers Welcome

The Potato Digger That Couldn't Dig Potatoes

The world's first successful gas-operated machine gun was the direct consequence of an inventor taking heed of the muzzle blast generated by the propellant gases from a rifle he was test firing. In 1889 John Moses Browning noticed the blast from his rifle parting the bulrushes several yards downrange at a gun club in the salt marshes near Ogden, Utah. Browning immediately tested this effect on a 5-pound iron block with a hole drilled in its center. After the bullet passed through the hole, the subsequent blast sent the block sailing across the room. His next experiment was with a lever-action rifle that he turned into a somewhat crude looking, but effective, semiautomatic weapon by this means. He then modified this system to fire in a full-auto mode. After more experimentation, the design was offered to Colt for production on 22 November 1890, less than a year from his shooting session in the bulrushes.

The U.S. Navy first tested the gun in 1893 and by 1895 it would accept both the Army's .30-40 Krag and Navy's 6mm Lee rounds. It became officially known as the Colt Model 1895 machine gun. Within a short time the troops dubbed it the "Potato Digger" because of the peculiar movement of its gas-actuating lever that swung in a half arc under the muzzle end of the barrel (note its similarity to the cycling movement of the lever-action rifle that gave Browning his original notion).

The gun fired from the locked-breech position. Propellant gases move through a gas port in the barrel just prior to the bullet leaving the muzzle. A piston that lies in the gas cylinder surrounding the outer edge of the gas port closes the gas port. The piston is attached to the gas-actuating lever that swings in a vertical plane. The movement of the gas lever moves the cloth belt forward, extracts and ejects the empty case and cocks the hammer. Simultaneously, the cartridge extractor pulls a cartridge out of the belt and onto the carrier. The retracting springs then rotate the gas lever forward and up. This causes the front end of the carrier to rise, bringing the cartridge

on the carrier directly in front of the bolt. The bolt then moves forward to chamber the round. At this time the feed wheel rotates to place a cartridge in position to engage the cartridge extractor, which is now moving forward. During the final forward motion of the gas lever, the bolt pin in the cam of the bolt's rib cants the rear end of the bolt down, causing it to lock firmly behind the shoulders in the receiver body. The trip then causes the sear to release the hammer, which impinges against the firing pin. This firing cycle will repeat until the trigger is released at a rate of between 400 to 500 rounds per minute. At least that's the way it was supposed to work.

After no more than several hundred rounds of continuous fire the Potato Digger will invariably overheat and "cook-offs" will result. In fact, you were exceedingly lucky if you could fire more than a hundred rounds without a stoppage of one sort or another. In a report dated 14 June 1895, a machine gun board at Springfield Armory detailed the following deficiencies of the Colt Model 1895: "numerous small working parts, dependency upon spiral springs, delicacy of mechanism, liability to be clogged by foreign particles, decrease in initial velocity due to loss of gases escaping through vent, vibration of muzzle and consequent inaccuracy, necessity of loading belts by hand before gun is used, and frequent interruptions in automatic firing from various causes. The board is of the opinion that in its present form, as shown by the tests made, this arm is not suitable for ordinary service and has no place in the land armament." Be that as it may, the Colt Model 1895 was sold in large numbers throughout South America and Europe and was used successfully by the Navy

Continued on page 24



The Marlin-Rockwell U.S. Navy Mark V Model 1917 machine gun was a total fiasco and all but a handful of the 1,605 manufactured were recalled and scrapped. As a result, the few that remain in existence today are incredibly rare. (inset) The Marlin-Rockwell U.S. Navy Mark V Model 1917 machine gun used a straight-line, piston-type gas system with an adjustable gas regulator instead of the gas-actuating lever method that resulted in the term "Potato Digger."

Force him to make the first move... dance him around like a girl...
and TAKE HIM OUT like a rag doll!

Why Are Bigger, Stronger, Taller And Meaner Multiple-Black Belt Bad Asses Absolutely Terrified Of Challenging This Mild, Middle-Aged (And Undefeated) No-Rules Cage Fighter From Arizona?

It's because his amazing new "simple and vicious" streetfighting system – perfected in illegal (felony) no-rules "pit" fights – allows you to *instantly* dominate and humiliate even experienced black-belt opponents... no matter how over-matched you are in size, strength or skill. The fight is *over* before he can blink.

Best part: You can learn it *almost overnight*, even if you're out-of-shape and have no previous fighting skills at all... *guaranteed!*

(Dateline -- Visalia, Ca) My office has been "action central" in the streetfighting world for over 10 years now. I rub elbows with domestic and foreign special forces (SEALS, DELTA, Russian Spetznaz), federal agents (CIA, FBI), big-city SWAT cops, and "black bag" operatives from organizations most civilians will never, ever know about.

Any of these guys can tell you how to fight.

But... if you want to learn how to fight very *quickly*... with an astonishing "short set" of viciously-*simple* secrets that will allow you to step up to *any* fighter, of *any* size and skill level, and *instantly* introduce him to a new world of **pain and fear**... then you **MUST** hear me out.

What's more... if you choose... *I will pay for your entire lesson*, out of my own pocket.

What I'm about to show you will *change your life*... and the way you walk the earth, *forever*.

Here's the story: The closest you will ever get to a real streetfight or combat situation is in the **illegal no-rules "cage" and "pit" fights** staged in underground arenas around the world. The only real difference is... in the street or battlefield, you can *run away*. In the cage...

There's No Place To Run!

Cage fights are bloody messes, and the losers often end up **permanently crippled**. In the cage, *all the bullshit ends*. You either win... or you lose. Period.

That's why I was so immediately interested when I heard about **Tom Proctor**. Out of *nowhere*, this unassuming guy is suddenly known as the fighter **no black belt will fight anymore**. He can't get guys

to meet him in the cage. He is undefeated (17-0) in both legal cage fights (with the **International Sport Combat Federation**), and illegal "pit" fights (put on by private money). In the *heavyweight* division.

But here's the kicker: Tom is 45 years old, and about *twenty pounds shy* of actually being a heavyweight! By no means would you call Tom "big". Every opponent he faced in the cage **outweighed him from 40 to 120 pounds or more** (of solid muscle, mind you)... was *taller* by up to 8 inches... and *all* of them were young studs in their twenties. They were **bigger** (by far), **younger** and in their prime, and **more experienced in no-rules fighting**.

And here comes Tom into the cage – shorter, old as dirt, looking almost *frail* next to the heavyweight monsters he was to fight, showing *none* of the prowess these "real" fighters expected. They licked their chops...

And The Cage Door Slammed Shut!

Results: Tom put them *all* down. **Fast.**

That 284-pound Texan, six foot eight, undefeated in 8 cage fights... *begging for mercy after just 37 seconds*.

That 268-pound Mexican strongman, six-two, the favorite by 100-to-1... barely lasted a minute and a half before *going out cold*.

That 22-0 Shoot-fighter from Canada... *knocked out in under a minute*. And on, and on – the Ju-Jitsu wrestler, the Okinawa-style kickboxer, the Muay Thai experts, the streetfighters, the ex-Spec Op soldiers, the nastiest and biggest and most vicious headhunters on



Tom Proctor may be 20-years older and 40-pounds lighter than any opponent he faces in the pit, but he is an undisputed and undefeated no-rules "cage" fighting champion. How is this possible? Tom finally steps forward and reveals his simple fighting secrets – and they're easier to learn than you can imagine!

the planet... they *all* went down in record times. Every single one of them.

Even the professional bouncer from the Baltimore strip club (6'8", 290 lbs.) – a bad mo-fo so *huge* the ambulance guys *couldn't get the straps around his chest* on the stretcher when they hauled him off.

And you know what Tom Proctor won for all his hard work? *Not a single penny*.

He never did it for the money.

He did it just to *prove a simple point*. He just wanted to let the world know there really is a **simple fighting system for average guys**...

And NO ONE Can Beat It!

And Tom didn't stop with his own vic-

tories. He took a group of guys off the street, most with **ZERO** fighting experience, **NO** skills at all, and **NO** "killer instinct". These yo-yo's were out-of-shape, not muscular, not coordinated, not gifted, not *anything*. In fact, a couple of them were **young women!**

Didn't matter to Tom. In the *shortest time* humanly possible, he used his teaching secrets to "**force-feed**" his simple, basic fighting skills into this motley group... and then sent them out to the cages for the *first fights of their lives!*

Result, as of Tuesday: A total of 68 no-rules cage bouts by 15 of his fighters. Record: **64 wins by knockout or submission**, 4 loses to decision. (Not a one of his guys has *ever* been knocked out or even hurt – the "decision" losses were actually "draws".)

In just an *amazing short time*, Tom took "lambs" and turned them into **fearless warriors**.

So what does all this have to do with you? Everything.

If Tom Proctor can take average Joes and turn them into vicious fighters who stare down and **knock out** meaner, heavier and more experienced opponents in no-rules cage fights (where there's *nowhere to run*)... just think what his techniques can do for a guy like *you!*

Tom's been *aching* for a chance to show guys like you what he can do for you. It's his mission – to **completely erase ALL the advantages** that big, muscular, intensely-trained assholes have against normal guys. His single-minded goal is to make *every* bully, rapist, robber and thrill-seeking punk think twice before jumping a guy (or a woman) they "think" they can easily take.

He wants *every* bad-ass bad guy to see the inside of a hospital if they get out of line.

It's a program I'm behind 100%. I've sponsored a lot of other fighting systems, but I've **NEVER** seen *anything* like Tom's "forgotten" streetfighting methods. Neither have you – in fact, *no one has*, outside the small group Tom has chosen to teach. The system he's perfected has roots in the mysterious ancient art of **Tao Chi Do**... but even the ancient masters *never had to face attackers twice their size in a cage with no place to hide*.

Right now is when you...

Finally Learn To Fight For REAL!

The key to Tom's fighting art is its *simplicity*. There is **no** intense training, **no** long months of practice required. The few skills you learn (quickly) *easily adapt to*

Listen To What Men Who Know Are Saying About Tom Proctor's Fighting Secrets!

"This stuff really works! I defended myself against 3 bikers and got one guy with a Rhino move... I think I broke his nose and some other stuff... The other two backed off!" --Rodney Ratt, Sask Canada

"Tom Proctor is without a doubt the best all around fighter that I have ever seen in my 26 years of studying the fighting arts." -- Brad Elbricht, Ft. Wayne, IN.

"Thanks Tom! After learning your cage fighting secrets, my confidence has gone through the roof, I no longer walk the streets in fear anymore!" --Allen Wiedlen, Tulare, CA

"If you had one hour to prepare for the fight of your life, Tom Proctor would be the first call that you make." --Jim Hallford, Venice Beach, CA

any situation, against any kind of fighter.

This is the **ONLY** set of fighting skills you'll *ever need* to win in hand-to-hand combat with another man. This is life-changing stuff. This will turn dangerous situations into *playtime* for you.

That's why it was so important for me to rush Tom into the studio, and get his "**learn it FAST**" single fighting lesson on videotape. I consider this video the most *important* fighting lesson I've ever witnessed... **and I'm betting my own money that you'll agree.**

In just *one short lesson*, Tom will show you:

- How to **immediately pump 400% more raw power** into every blow you deliver! (Tom has taught *78-year old women* to knock out grown men with a single strike – and they've *done it*, while being attacked in their homes at night!)

- How to create a **protective shield** that will **NOT ALLOW** any fighter to come close to striking you *at any time!* (The Muay Thai kickboxers who faced Tom call it "**voodoo**" defense because they are so amazed they *can't penetrate it*... but it's really just a *simple* secret – *easily* mastered once you know what to do — of **redirecting incoming energy**.)

- How to quickly make a strong opponent **weak!** (You'll see his "will to fight" rush out of him like a punctured balloon, while he just *exhausts* himself with frustration and rage... turning him into a nice soft *punching bag* for you, no matter how big and pissed-off he was to start.)

- How to tap the astonishing "**hidden strength**" **inside you** that will *immediately* fill you with the **steel-eyed confidence and energy of a true warrior!** (Works so fast and so effectively, it's like *magic*. Tom himself has used this "**super-human power**" to take a bullet, finish

the fight... and still leave the hospital *before the other guy was out of Intensive Care!*)

- And... **how to quickly open up a skilled attacker, knock him down and finish him off in seconds!** (*All* the options are yours... and he goes down when *you* decide to take him down!)

What's more... what you learn from Tom will "**fuse**" together *seamlessly* with any fighting skills you already have! (Unlike all other martial arts, where you must forget everything you know to learn new styles.)

But look – I don't care *what* your **current skill level** is... or what kind of **shape** you're in. Rookie or experienced fighter... this is a *once-in-a-lifetime opportunity* to learn a **few simple skills that will allow you to take on any fighter, anywhere, under any circumstances.**

And I don't care how *confident* you are with your current skills... once you know *these* secrets, you'll finally have the kind of **fearless nerve** that quiets a room when you walk in. People can *smell* this kind of confidence on you... and they give you a wide berth.

It's like being your own **300-pound bodyguard.**

So here's the deal: Just call my office at **1-800-899-8153, Dept. CF-23** and tell whoever answers you want "**The Lost Art Fighting Video**". You can use your credit card... or, if you prefer to pay by check or money order, just fill out the "**Priority Order Form**" and mail it to TRS. Either way, your video package will be *rush-shipped* to you by return mail.

The price for this amazing fighting video is **just \$69**... *but you don't risk a penny*. It comes with an **unconditional 3-month Money Back Guarantee of Sat-**

isfaction – if you aren't 100% convinced this video will quickly give you the fighting skills you want... for any reason or for *no reason at all*... simply send the video back (in any condition), and you will receive an **immediate and prompt refund**... *no questions asked*. That means – if you so choose – you'll have seen all the secrets Tom has to offer... absolutely for **free**. And that comes out of my own pocket.

Why am I doing this? It's a *serious financial risk* for me... and if I wasn't utterly confident in what we have here, I could easily go bankrupt overnight.

But I'm not concerned at all. You know why? Because, like I said, I've seen it all... *every fighter of any worth in the world* has been in touch with my office, and I've backed dozens of fighters who could tear the head off Godzilla.

Yet... I've **NEVER** seen *anything like this*. I love having a "voodoo shield" (as the Muay Thai kickboxers called it) that protects me from being hit even by a trained boxer or black belt... and I *especially* love knowing the secrets of **instantly demolishing bigger opponents**, no matter how overmatched I am "on paper".

I'm betting – *with my own money* – that you're going to be so amazed at what you learn... that sending the video back will be the *last thing* on your mind. Anyone who is *serious about learning to fight*... *really fight*, and *win every time*... will understand why Tom's new "forgotten" system is causing such excitement.

But you must call today! My partners have put an absolute time limit on how long I can keep this offer on the table.

So, in **just 11 days**, this incredible opportunity goes away! I simply cannot financially expose my company any longer than that. But it's plenty of time for anyone who's *serious* about fighting, like you.

Call. You risk *nothing*... because if you're not completely convinced, **I will pay for your lesson**. You won't find a better deal anywhere in the fighting world.

Best regards,



Bob Pierce

President, TRS Direct

P.S. One more thing – *I almost forgot!* I will also rush you a **Free Special Report** by Tom Proctor called "**Advance Warning!**" In this free report, you'll discover *everything* Tom learned about "reading" an opponent in a glance – so you'll know *before he makes a move* if he's a boxer... a grappler... a kickboxer...

or a karate fighter. This kind of "**early warning system**" gives you a **HUGE** advantage in a toe-to-toe no-rules fight, because you'll know *exactly* how he's going to come at you, while he won't have a clue what *you're* going to do!

Professional fighters have privately paid Tom *hundreds of dollars* for this information... and we were going to package it separately and sell it for \$99 all by itself... but I changed my mind. I want you to have the **entire arsenal of fight-**

ing skills Tom offers, *right away*. So I'm including this **Special Report**, absolutely **free**, when you order his video. And it's yours to **KEEP**, too, even if you later decide to return the video for a refund. Consider it my gift to you, just for trusting me on this amazing new fighting system.

P.P.S. Remember, *you only have 11 days to call!* Do it now, while this letter is still hot in your hands. If you're serious about learning to fight to win, you're going to love Tom's fast-learn system!

Tom Proctor's Personal U A R A N T E E

"I tend to be a guy of all action and little talk... and, (as an **undefeated** NHB fighter, kick boxer, and Muay Thai fighter who *regularly* defeats opponents at least 20 years younger and 40 pounds heavier than myself), when I finally *do* talk about the secrets of self-defense -- people tend to listen.

If you're seriously interested in being able to walk the streets with total confidence knowing you can take apart 99% of the street thugs out there, then listen to this...

I am so *confident* that you will find this two-video package the *most* simple, easy-to-learn and highly effective material you've ever seen that I'm making it totally **risk free to you!** If you're not 100% satisfied (for *any* reason), just send the tapes back to TRS (in any condition) and I'll personally make sure you're rushed *every penny* of your purchase price. You've got my word on that!"

-- Tom Proctor



Priority Order Form!
For fastest service use your credit card
and Call Toll-FREE
1-800-899-8153 (Dept **CF-23**)

YES! I want to learn the simple skills Tom knows that will allow me to demolish bigger and better-trained fighters... instantly! And I have 3 months to decide if putting my money down was worth it... and if I don't agree, for any reason, I can simply send the video back for a complete refund – which means you'll have paid for my lesson in this amazing "forgotten" fighting art! That's a great, no-risk deal. Here's how I want to pay:

Enclosed is my check or money order (make payable to TRS) for \$74 (\$69 + 5 S&H)

I prefer to pay with my credit card; Please charge my:

Visa MasterCard Discover AmEx

Card# _____ Name: _____

Expires _____ Address: _____

Signature _____ City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

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in the Spanish-American War.

The U.S. Government's total unpreparedness for World War I and the lack of machine guns resulted in deployment of the Colt Potato Digger even though the Army dis-tained it. The only modification was the addition of an interchangeable barrel. The Navy called this the Mark III version and the Army referred to it as the Model 1917. Colt supplied 1,500 of these weapons before the end of the war. Marlin-Rockwell Company, New Haven, Connecticut also produced a substantial number, including a straight-line gas model for aircraft and tank use. It has been estimated that as many as 100,000 of all types were eventually manufactured.

Both Colt and Marlin Potato Diggers are relatively common and there are also a few Model 1917 and 1918 Marlin-Rockwell aircraft machine guns in circulation among collectors in this country. However, the most unusual Marlin-Rockwell of all is the almost completely unknown U.S. Navy Mark V Model 1917 machine gun using a straight-line gas system in a heavy "ground" envelope. Only two photographs of this gun have ever been published, both in the late William S. Brophy's *Marlin Firearms*. Only two of this mysterious version is known to exist. I have one and a prominent collector once owned another. On my specimen both the receiver and matching barrel are marked "U.S.N. INSPR. J.B.S. 1917 CAL. .30 MARK V. NO. 3056". Why are these guns so rare and what is the history behind their development?

From an obscure government report, entitled *Navy Ordnance Activities, World War 1917-1918* and published in 1920 by the Government Printing Office comes the apparent answer to this intrigu-



The cocking handle on the U.S. Navy Mark V Model 1917 machine gun is that of the Marlin-Rockwell aircraft guns.

ing puzzle. Prior to the outbreak of World War I, the United States Navy had a total of only 800 machine guns, of which 400 were Colt Mark I model 1 and 400 were Benet-Mercier Mark II model 1. Several types of machine guns were tested just before the declaration of war. The most satisfactory was the Colt Mark III. Two contracts were placed for a total of 1,500 of these guns.

During this time frame the Marlin-Rockwell Corporation submitted a modification of the Colt Mark III for test. It was air-cooled with the same heavy barrel equipped with radial cooling fins and, of course, gas-operated.

But a straight-line piston action with an adjustable gas regulator was substituted for the Colt gas lever system. The gun passed a preliminary test and between 27 February 1917 and 27 April 1917, four contracts were placed with Marlin-Rockwell for 1,605 of these guns that received the designation of "Mark V."

All four contracts were completed. However, although they had functioned satisfactorily with 1916 Frankford Arsenal ammunition, for reasons unspecified in the report they would not function when placed in service with ammunition of then current manufacture. They were recalled and returned to the company. Apparently not all were returned, as there are at least two in existence today. What happened to the guns that were returned? I don't know. Some parts, such as the cocking handle and other bits and pieces, may have been removed for use on Marlin-Rockwell aircraft guns. The rest of the components were probably scrapped.

And that's the reason why for, more than a year after I obtained

Continued on page 70

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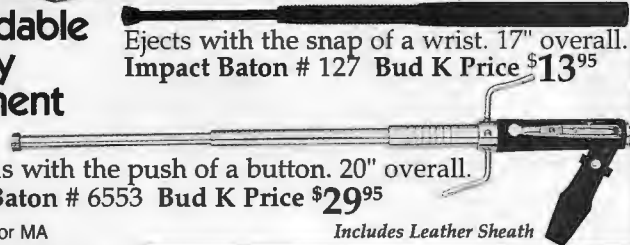


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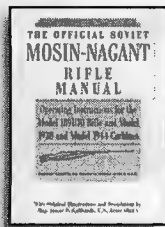
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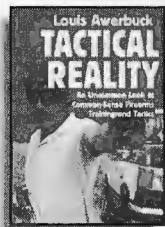
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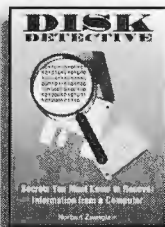
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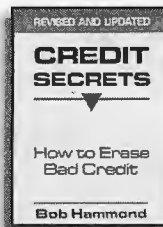
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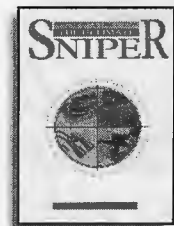
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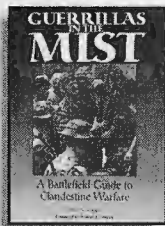
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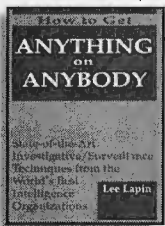
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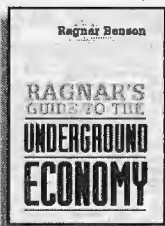
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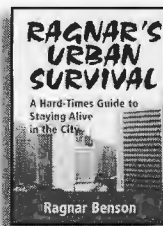
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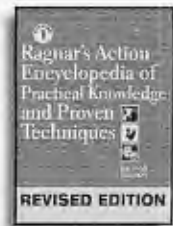
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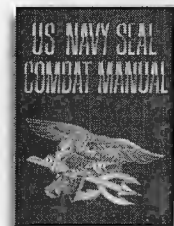
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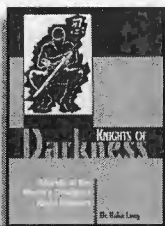
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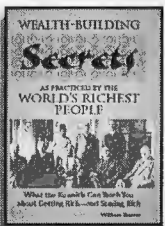
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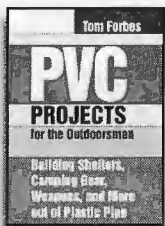
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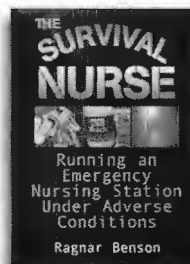
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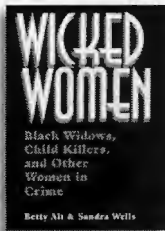
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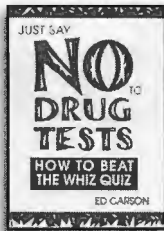
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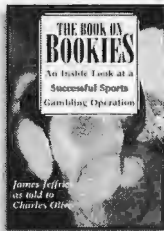
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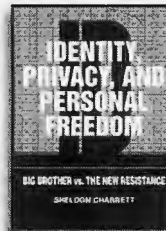
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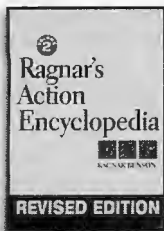
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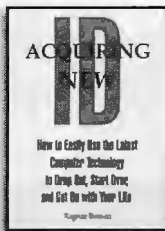
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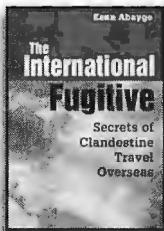
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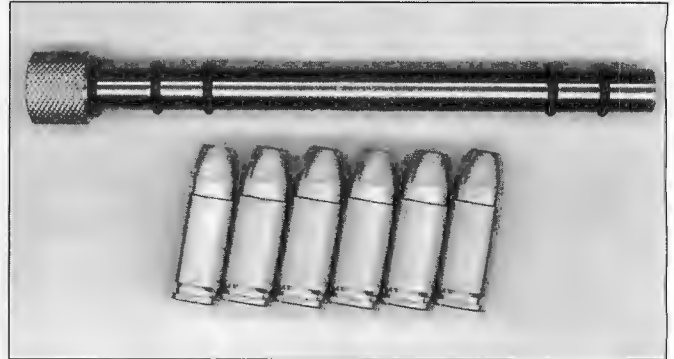
One of many old wheezers that happens to be true is, "train like you'll fight, because you'll fight like you train." This translates to: Train realistically, including the weapon(s) you use on duty.

This may be easier said than done, due to the cost of ammo and lack of easily accessed and adequate environs to keep your skills honed. But not to worry, Loch Leven Industries has come up with an efficient, economical and accurate system they call Convert-A-Pell, which allows the use of air-rifle pellets in a wide variety of small arms, driven by a center-fire primer.

Differing from other "sub-caliber" devices, the Convert-A-Pell does not fire fixed ammo, but propels a skirted air rifle pellet from a sub-caliber chamber. In handguns, there is also a sub-caliber bore insert (such as 9mm or .357), which provides a .22 bore for the pellet.

Rifle-caliber Convert-A-Pells are available in .22 Hornet, .221 Fireball, .222, .223, .22-250, .225 and .220 Swift. For hand gunners, calibers available include 9mm, .38, .357, .41 Mag, .44 Mag, .45 ACP, and they are made to suite handguns as made by Browning, Colt, Ruger, S&W, Dan Wesson, Beretta, Walther and Taurus. A wide variety of barrel lengths are available from, 4" to 7-1/2".

Not only does the Convert-A-Pell serve as an invaluable training aid, it gives double duty from the above-listed service and hunting calibers and your guns that shoot them. As the .22 pellet is propelled



at between 800-900 fps, it will pass through the generic "pine board," and also through your generic garbage-can rat, garden pests and other varmints one might normally have to keep a pellet gun for. Noise levels are about on a par with an air rifle of equivalent capability.

The Convert-A-Pell units are very finely made, function very well for their intended purpose, and extend the utility of a "full caliber" firearm to cheap practice and effective varmint control. Every gun cabinet should have one or more of these units: We guarantee it'll be out of its box a lot.

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New From Nosler

The top-quality bullets Nosler has been producing for many decades are not news: They've been innovators since they started in business. But every time they expand their line with new items it's worth noting, as they have consistently anticipated (or perhaps listened to) what the market wanted. Three new bullets have been recently released, of particular interest to shooters in matches, at varmints, and of surplus 8x57 rifles.

One of the most widely used rifle rounds in history is the excellent 8x57mm. Uncounted millions of quality arms have been made — are still made — in this caliber. It is an excellent cartridge, but getting excellent bullets to reload can sometimes be a hassle. Likewise, those who favor the 8mm-06 as a game round for deer, black bear and elk, will have to roll their own — and not every mom 'n' pop grocery store

handles 8mm Remington Magnum, either. Thus, Nosler's introduction of their new Ballistic Tip 180-grain will be well received by those of 8mm persuasion. Essentially a hollowpoint with a polycarbonate tip to ensure a continuously streamlined ogive, the Ballistic Tip features a true tapered jacket and lead-alloy core for reliable expansion at a wide range of impact velocities.

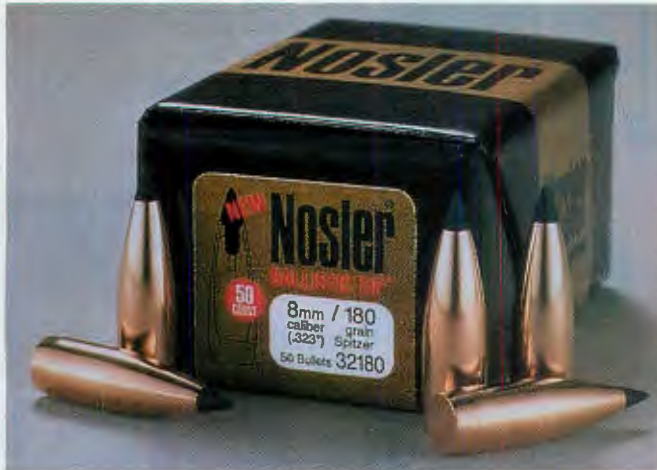


Those who paste small game at long ranges have found Nosler's .243 80-grain to be very stable out to long ranges, but very accurate even at close ranges. This consistent accuracy over a broad spectrum of velocities and at varying ranges is not something varmint hunters expect from many bullets or

loads. The Nosler is specifically engineered to minimize wind deflection, and its precise manufacture helps ensure stability from the muzzle to the target.

Also a second bullet has been introduced by Nosler for their J4 Competition line introduced last year. The new 155-grain .30 bullet is intended for competition, but will surely find favor among police counter-snipers and military users as well. This hollow-point boat-tail was designed for Palma, service rifle and silhouette shooting, and brags a high ballistic coefficient of .450, with a lighter weight for higher muzzle velocity.

For information on these and other reliable Nosler products, contact them at Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 671, Bend, OR 97709; phone: 800-285-3701; or check them out on the web at www.nosler.com.



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WORLD SITREP



1

UNITED STATES

Russian batteries peter out: Shuttle astronauts complete repairs to exterior of international space station in seven-hour space walk by two crewmembers. Malfunctioning Russian batteries are to be replaced inside the station. • **Wen Ho Lee:** Justice Department report criticizes handling of Wen Ho Lee spy case, saying the FBI focused too early on the Taiwan-born scientist as China's source for nuclear secrets. It also faults a lack of urgency early in the investigation. • **Nukes:** Nuclear-arsenal elimination pledged by five permanent U.N. Security Council members as part of new disarmament agenda. Vow marks the first of its kind, by top nuclear powers making known their desires to disarm, but not timetables has been set. • **Smith & Wesson:** House Republicans try to prevent government from favoring Smith & Wesson with new gun contracts in plan to undermine Clinton's weapons pact with the company. Restrictions in Defense Department authorization bill would forbid requiring department to buy Smith & Wesson guns.

2

LEBANON

Chaos: Southern Lebanon falls into chaos as Israel's security zone nears collapse. South Lebanon Army fighters, growing increasingly fearful as their Israeli allies move toward withdrawal, begin fleeing positions and begging for asylum for their families. Israeli outposts left unprotected. *Hezbollah* guerrillas and Lebanese civilians rush to reclaim villages seized two decades ago. Several die in confused fighting. Residents of northern Israel ordered into shelters. Israeli allies in parts of the zone vow to hold. Barak hods emergency meeting of advisers, and put Lebanon pullout on table.

5

SIERRA LEONE

Mutilations: Soldiers discovered at least six mutilated bodies wearing uniforms of U.N. peacekeepers from Zambia, but rebel thefts of U.N. uniforms is making identification uncertain. Meanwhile, rebels freeing hostages, but hold onto 280 U.N. troops captured in May. • **More troops:** Secretary-General Annan recommends increasing size of U.N. peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone to 17,000 troops from about 11,000. West African countries agreed to provide at least 3,000 reinforcements.

6

SERBIA

Mass trial: Court sentences 143 ethnic Albanians to lengthy prison terms for attacks on Belgrade's troops in Kosovo during NATO air campaign last year. Largest mass trial in Serbia's history stemmed from pro-NATO rally in town of Djakova.

1

11

10

ETHIOPIA

"Senseless" border war: Ethiopian forces advance on Eritrea's capital, and U.S. orders partial evacuation of its embassy staff in Asmara. Other nations make similar plans as Ethiopia continues to capitalize on recent victories in the two-year-old border war. U.N. Security Council has banned arms shipments to the two countries and is urging a peace agreement. U.S. President Clinton calls the border war "senseless."

11

HAITI

Violent campaign season: Haitians vote in parliamentary and local elections, braving campaign of intimidation marked by at least 15 killings and disorganization at polling places. Candidates allied with ex-President Aristide are favored.

14

KOSOVO

No go for Kosovo: U.S. Senate rejects Kosovo withdrawal in what's characterized as a major victory for Clinton. U.S. president narrowly defeated Senate demands that U.S. troops be withdrawn next year unless Congress votes to authorize continued peacekeeping effort. President's narrow 53-47 victory may reflect weariness with what many politicians see as open-ended commitment to keep thousands of U.S. ground troops in the Balkans.

15

IRAN

Bad loan? World Bank approves \$232 million in loans to Iran, overriding U.S. opposition. The money, for two health and sewage projects, marks first loans to Islamic government in Tehran since 1993. U.S. voted against the loans, citing concerns about terrorist activity and Iran's failure to adopt an economic reform program.

16

ZIMBABWE

Land reform: U.N. to develop new land-reform program for Zimbabwe. Secretary-General Annan asks U.N.'s development arm to help create plan based on land purchase that would ease violence stemming from seizures of hundreds of white-owned farms.

3

RUSSIA

Airstrikes: Government threatens airstrikes against Afghanistan, which it accuses of giving aid to Chechen rebels. A top Putin aide alleges that representatives of Chechen President Maskhadov met with *Taliban* officials and Osama bin Laden recently to hire mercenaries. • **Populist pledges:** Kasyanov wins easy confirmation as prime minister from country's parliament. In speech to the Duma, he promised reform, with populist pledges to avoid any measures that could hurt ordinary Russians. Vote highlighted strong support for Russian President Putin within Parliament.

4

CHINA

WTO: New trade deal with European Union all but seals China's entry into World Trade Organization. Under the agreement, the EU has agreed to support China's bid to join the WTO. All 134 WTO members must approve China's entry into the WTO, and after the EU agreement only five of the 134 remained unconvinced: Costa Ricas, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Switzerland. Chinese agreements with the five are almost eminent, meaning China could be part of the WTO by late summer or early fall.

7

NIGERIA

Religious clash: New Christian-Muslim clashes kill at least three people in northern Nigerian city of Kaduna. Troops have been deployed. Fighting over imposition of Islamic law leaves dozens dead in the city.

8

ISRAEL

Violence wave: Barak travels to Palestinian areas and suspends unofficial peace talks after an Israeli child gets badly hurt in West Bank firebombing. Barak also cancels meeting with Clinton in U.S. amid wave of violence that has left six Palestinians dead and hundreds injured.

9

SRI LANKA

Airport shelled: Tamil rebels claim to have seized key town in their drive to retake Jaffna. Earlier, rebels shelled an airport that serves as life-line for 40,000 troops trapped on the peninsula. Norwegian delegation arrives in bid to start peace talks.

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KOREA

Summit: North Korea and South Korea reach agreement on agenda and other issues for first summit between the countries' top leaders. Analysts say it's a huge step toward making the historic meeting a reality. After weeks of talks, the two countries reached a 15-point pact. Increased economic ties will likely be a central topic.

13

FIJI

Poised to kill: President claims rebels are poised to kill premier-elect and other hostage officials. Leader of coup attempt denied such a threat, but added that he won't let ethnic-Indian premier take office.

17

PHILIPPINES

Explosions: Blasts tear through two towns, killing five and injuring at least 50. Nearly simultaneous explosions in Jolo and Zamboanga lead police to suspect the bombs were set by Abu Sanyaf rebels, who are fighting for separate Islamic state.

18

NORTHERN IRELAND

Unions and Catholics: Unionists delay vote on whether to resume shared government with Catholics. Ulster Unionist Party's decision to push back vote by one week dashed Britain's plan to transfer powers to Belfast.

World Sitrep is compiled by the SOF staff with information from various media and correspondents.

FLAK

Rhodesia Remembered

Dear Bob: It was good to speak to you again so many years after our first conversation at Victoria Falls during the war in Rhodesia!

I have enclosed some literature on the Museum Project which the [Rhodesian Army] Association is involved with. We have been fortunate to acquire most of the



Rhodesian Military records which will be a great asset in years to come to researchers on the conflict.

Soldier Of Fortune could give our museum some publicity and former members of the Rhodesian Forces may be interested to know of our existence. To this end we are producing a publicity pack which will contain:

- signed A5 print by War Artist John Hopkins (ex-1RAR)
- badge of the museum project
- Pocket Guide to Rhodesian Military Badges
- information on the museum project
- list of open Association social events
- additional goodies as yet to be decided

The pack will cost a minimum donation of 10 pounds, payable by cash or credit card, the proceeds of which will go to the museum fund.

Steven Kippax
10 Glynde Reach
Harrison Street

London WC1 H8JZ, England
Phone: 011-44-0207-419-0512

Steven, we wish you and the Association every success with the RAA Museum project, which will become part of the Empire & Commonwealth Museum in Bristol. In military matters, the Lion and Her Cubs do many things right — and museums are one of them. We have reprinted one of Hopkins' works from the Rhodesian War herewith.

Be Our Guest

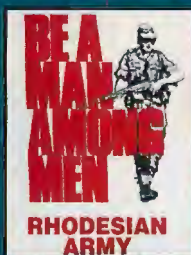
We currently subscribe to your journal *Soldier Of Fortune*. One of the uses we make of the journal is to index the detailed articles of relevance to the work of the Pattern Room and include the record in our Current Awareness Bulletin. The bulletin is issued on a controlled distribution to c. 50 units who have an interest in small arms matters.



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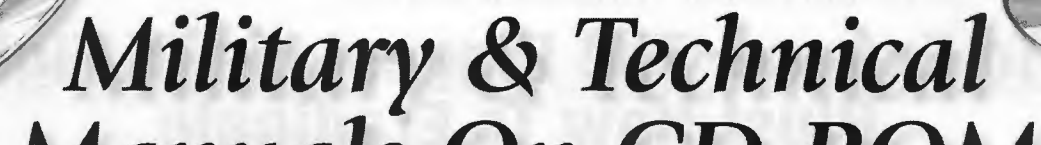
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Dear Friend,

Did you know it is possible right now to possess MORE real fighting knowledge than the most 'Grandmasters' in any martial art? In fact knowing these closely guarded secrets instantly allows you to defeat any opponent... regardless of your size or strength. More importantly did you also know these secrets completely eliminate any feelings of FEAR? Yeah right, you say? Who could possibly have the balls to make that bold, seemingly outrageous statement? Well, I'm about to introduce you to a man who's made his livelihood for the last twenty years proving that the biggest lie out there is that it takes years to become a deadly fighter.

In Mere Hours My Men Were Destroying 'Gurus' With 20 Years In The Martial Arts

I'm a former Navy SEAL (the US Navy's Elite Commandos) and in 1987 we were introduced to one Jerry Lee Peterson. This guy came to us from some, let's just say, 'highly credible' sources within our government. At the time the SEALs were searching to standardize the way they taught hand-to-hand fighting to the hard charging SEAL combat platoons. We faced the same problems you face today; we didn't have twenty years to become effective fighters. Our guys needed a program, which got them to fight with or without weapons and guaranteed they could not be defeated, no matter what the attacker knew about fighting. It needed to be quickly learned and easily retained, based on natural body movement and had to work regardless of size or strength.

Needless to say EVERY martial art and fighting system we tested (and we tested them all: Karate, Kung Fu, JKD, Jui Jitsu, Sambo...) all failed the test. They either took way too long to learn, could not handle modern weapons, failed against multiple attackers or required excessive athletic coordination. More importantly these 'arts' or 'sports' were all DEFENSIVE in nature, a term we didn't know was a problem... until we met Jerry.

This guy comes in and takes 14 SEALs with very little hand-to-hand experience and announces after a few hours of training them we could put his guys up against the most highly experienced fighting gurus of the SEAL Teams. I mean some of these 'gurus' had been trained practically from birth in the martial arts. These dudes were feared within the tight community of the SEALs and anyone who has spent anytime around the "Teams" knows SEALs fear next to nothing. But Peterson insisted and the demo went on; to the amazement of all in attendance the Peterson-trained SEAL operator DESTROYED each and every of the 'gurus' quickly and effectively. Not only that, these guys easily adapted whether the attackers used fists, kicks, grapples, chokes or weapons... it just didn't matter. Jerry's fighters seemed to just focus on taking out

the attacker (more about this in the FREE report). And you too can be just like the Peterson-trained SEAL commandos, when you're armed with the knowledge of his AMAZINGLY effective yet simple to learn fighting system (more on that later).

The One True Ultimate Fighting System

So who is this Jerry Peterson dude and what can his revolutionary fighting system do for YOU? Only give you the confidence to never waste another day of your life fearing another man. Ya see this system of his wasn't developed by some ancient 'grandmaster' with some mystical (or should I say questionable) background. Nor was it something that was watered down into some 'ultimate competition' that pretends to be real yet has rules and a ref. No this system was developed in the harsh jungle combat of the Vietnam War. That's where a 19-year-old soldier was literally dropped into a horrific fire-fight after only his 3rd day 'in country' (as they say) and what did he do? He felt the paralyzing fear of imminent death taking hold of him... why? Because the 'combat training' he had received failed him... he was waiting for someone, anyone to tell him what to do, to lead him, yet no one did. So if he was going to survive this, it was up to him and guess what he did? He got mad, I mean hellfire and brimstone MAD, and right then and there promised himself he would never wait for another man to tell him what to do. He then looked and found the enemy who pinned them down, CHARGED and took them out in one smooth action. That was the dawn of Special Combat Reactionary Systems (SCARS®).

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That 19-year-old kid was Jerry Lee Peterson. He went on to serve 2 tours as a 'pointman' with 173rd Airborne Charlie Company. That unit is credited by historians as seeing some of the MOST fierce combat of that war and Peterson arguably held the most dangerous job at 'point'. It was in those jungles that he saw what a defensive mindset did to men, how it caused them to freeze and die. He survived numerous overrun situations (where the enemy outnumbered and actually overruns you) requiring hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon killing. This was due to the revelation of what he was later to call the Offensive Mindset. The ability not to worry or fear what your enemy may do to you and only focus on what you are going to do to him.

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As a supplement to the bulletin, I am seeking permission to photocopy some of the smaller items for inclusion within the bulletin. For example, from a recent issue of *Soldier Of Fortune* (May 2000), we would wish to make multiple copies of the section on page 32 headed "The Snipod." By allowing us to undertake this activity on a regular basis, we believe that we are promoting your services to an influential audience. I can confirm that the bulletin is not used for any commercial purposes.

Robert A, Sharrock, Librarian
Ministry of Defence Pattern Room
Nottingham, England

Coupla Waaks 'Longside The Head



I read your article in *SOF* concerning active shooters and law enforcement preparedness. The article was sent to our unit by a friend of ours in Dev Group. Your article is precisely why I would never read *SOF* seriously. You

have no idea what you are talking about concerning how we train our officers for active shooters and you are passing a bunch of crap. It is clowns like you that give SWAT teams a bad name. But hey your [sic] making good money. If you want to write about something at least try to get your facts straight.

Ofer Richard Waak LAPD/SWAT
[11:23 AM]

After reading Humphries [sic] article on active shooters and law enforcement, it reaffirms why I don't read your magazine. You allow people to write things they have no knowledge about. He tries to talk about how we train our officers for this situation and he has his facts completely wrong. You will be also getting an e-mail that I sent to him and cc'd to you. Between the two of you, you should start a circus, you already have the clowns.

Ofer Richard Waak LAPD/SWAT
[11:21 AM]

We thank you for your insightful critique.

Kudo to Hugo

I just finished reading your co-authored article in the May 2000 issue of *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine. I found it to be well researched and very informative. "Great job!" to you as well as Mr. Humphries. I am recommending this article to as many Patrol and Entry/Tactical officers as possible, and our team leader is also bringing it to the attention of our administration.

Patrick
Via snipersonline

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Kudos, Colonel

Congratulations on your re-election to the NRA Board, and our continuing thanks for your no-compromise stance on the Second Amendment. If ever there was a time we needed Board members who would stand and fight, this is it.

T.W.A. Ketchins
Via E-mail

Col. Brown [who came in 5th among all candidates], expresses thanks for your congratulations, and pledges to continue the fight.

High School Report?

Is it possible for *SOF* to provide me with a list of non-extradition countries, to the U.S. of course. I can't seem to compile a complete list and I need it for a high school report. I figured if anyone would know the you guys would. Thanks, *SOF*.

Dedicated Reader

We'd certainly like to help you, but it was unclear from your letter if you wanted to commit a heinous crime in the United States and then bug out to the safety of another country, or if you want to commit a heinous crime in another country and flee to the USA.

Of Course We Scooped Everyone Again ...



I was scanning the news on my computer and saw a story in *Newsweek* about the overcount by U.S. Forces for the Kosovo bombing missions. I thought that was funny because although I can't find the issue, I am sure I read all about it in *SOF* about a year ago.

Bill Barlow
Abilene, Texas

Yes, you did read it first in SOF. In April 1999 our intrepid Chief Foreign Correspondent Mark Milstein was all over the ground in Kosovo and Serbia. He hoped to get arrested and beat up by Serb police, to steal parts of the F117 they shot down — and to find and photo some of the armor/artillery we claimed to have destroyed with the video-war bombing campaign. He was successful only on the first two points. Ground-pounding across the theater, he was drawn to the conclusion that NATO claims of success were based on hope, not hits. The numbers claimed by Gen. Shelton were "around 120 tanks ... About 220 armored personnel carriers ... Up to

450 artillery and mortar pieces." According to the USAF report cited by Newsweek, the real numbers were 14 tanks, 18 APCs, 20 artillery pieces. Of the 744 "confirmed" strikes by NATO pilots, USAF investigators on the ground found evidence of only 58. Hundreds of trucks, cars, passenger buses and decoys were the real casualties. Why was SOF a year ahead of the other media with the truth? Because a year ago we were the first to put a man at risk on the ground to get the truth. It's what we do.

Putting Colonials Together

Keep up the good work! I enjoy reading your publication and have just renewed my subscription for another two years.

I seek your assistance on contact details (postal or e-mail) for Vector Sporting Firearms, bolt-action rifles in particular.

Further to your review some time ago on the above, I have tried unsuccessfully to contact Vector for information, and hope that you may provide a current contact address.

L. Vitale
Underdale, South Australia

Vector Sporting Firearms is part of Denel. Their mail address is Box 5445, Pretoria 0001, Republic of South Africa; phone: 011 27 12 620 2554; e-mail: karriensk@liw.denel.co.za. ☒

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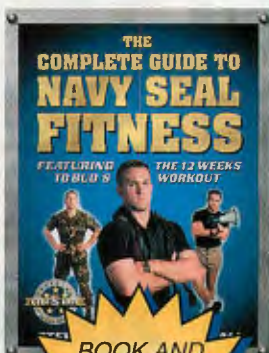
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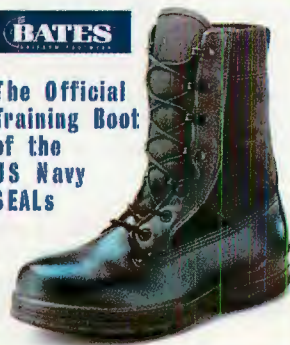
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Text & Photos by
Peter G. Kokalis

Romanian Sniper Rifle

The Romak 3 sniper rifle as imported by Intrac Arms International (Dept. SOF, 5005 Chapman Highway, Knoxville, TN 37920; phone: 423-573-0065; fax: 423-579-0937) is based upon the Romanian PSL/FPK military sniper rifle system. Both have receivers and operating systems based upon the Romanian RPK squad automatic, not the Russian *Samozaryadnaya snaiperskaya vintovka Dragunova* — SVD sniper rifle.

The SVD receiver is a milled drop forging. That of the Romak 3 is a pinned and riveted sheet metal stamping. As the RPK squad automatic is chambered for the intermediate-size 7.62x39mm cartridge, a steel reinforcing plate was riveted to each side of the receiver at the rear to accommodate the greater recoil impulse of the full-size 7.62x54R round. The sheet metal top cover has been stamped with reinforcing ribs in the AKM manner. All steel components, with the exception of the hard-chromed piston, have been provided with a black oxide finish.

The Romak 3 is manufactured by ROMARM (aka RATMIL, Dept. SOF, 48-50 Calea Victoriei, Pasajul Victoriei, sector 1, Bucharest 70102, Romania; phone: +40-



The Romak 3 sniper rifle is based upon the Romanian PSL/FPK military sniper rifle system. Both have receivers and operating systems based upon the Romanian RPK squad automatic, not the Russian Dragunov. The Romak 3 shot surprisingly well from the bench and constantly produced 1-inch groups at 100 meters with Hungarian 150-grain Soft Point ammunition.

1-613 43 66; fax: +40-1-312 29 88). Its overall length is approximately 45.3 inches (1,150 mm) and it weighs about 9 pounds (4.06 kg), empty and without the optical sight. The scope weighs about 0.5-pound (0.23 kg). The barrel is 24.6 inches (625 mm) in length, and has four grooves with a

right-hand twist of one turn in 10 inches (254 mm) over 22.4 inches (570 mm) of rifling. The bore and chamber are chrome-lined in the manner common to all ComBloc small arms.

To meet BATF import regulations, the bayonet lug has been milled off. In any

event, bayonets don't belong on sniper rifles. In addition, the unique Romanian FPK flash hider has been altered to a BATF-approved muzzle compensator configuration.

The skeletonized, wood-laminate buttstock is only somewhat reminiscent of that of the Dragunov. Instead of a removable padded cheekpiece (all too easily lost in the field) there is a swell on top of the stock that serves as an integral cheekpiece. The rear sling swivel, located inside the rear end of the stock, retains the ribbed, steel buttplate and itself is held in place by two steel pins driven through the wood-laminate. A reddish-brown Bakelite pistol grip cap is held in place by a single screw. Both the top handguard, which is part of the gas cylinder assembly, and the bottom forearm (which



The Russian-made four-power PSO-1 scope with a 24mm objective lens, features battery-powered reticle illumination. With coated lenses, light transmission is very good and the image is sharp and clear at all useful ranges. Equally important, it will hold zero with repeated removal and re-installation.

has five elongate ventilation ports) are of solid wood construction. All of the wood furniture has a clear varnish finish.

The curved Romak 3/FPK magazines hold either five or 10 rounds (one of each is provided) and since this is a rimmed cartridge, care must be taken that the round on top is in front of the rim of the cartridge beneath it. Unlike most Kalashnikovs, there is a hold-open-device that locks the bolt rearward after the last shot has been fired. The magazine release catch, directly in front of the trigger, is a spring-loaded flapper-type and magazines must be inserted from the front and rolled back to engage the catch. While similar in construction and appearance, Romanian FPK and Russian SVD magazines are not interchangeable. Both are staggered-column, detachable box-types with reinforcing ribs stamped into the sheet metal body walls. The followers are made of steel and they have an easily removable floorplate for maintenance. Oddly enough, the two FPK magazines supplied with *Soldier Of Fortune's* test specimen were serial-numbered to the rifle.

Aging and Post Cold War OPTICS

The Russian-made four-power PSO-1 scope with a 24mm objective lens, features battery-powered reticle illumination. Fortunately, the variant issued with the Romak 3 has an additional battery housing end cap that accepts either a standard 1.5-volt size AA battery or a 3.6-volt lithium battery in the same configuration. The Russian model uses a battery almost impossible to locate in the United States. When turned on the reticle pattern is illuminated in amber. A rubber eyepiece provides the correct eye relief of 2.7 inches. Field of view is six degrees. With coated lenses, light transmission is very good and the image is sharp and clear at all useful ranges. Equally important, it will hold zero with repeated removal and re-installation. However, its four-power magnification is low by today's military standards. There is an integral, collapsing sunshade.

There is also an unusual rangefinding reticle pattern that has been adapted from the RPG-7V's optical sight. It consists of a series of steps above a solid base line. Every other step is marked in 200-meter intervals, from "2" (the highest step) for 200 meters to "10" (the step closest to the base line) for 1,000 meters. Just align an enemy soldier with his feet on the base line. The system is based upon a target 5 feet 7 inches (1.7 meters) in height. The step that matches the top of his head indicates his distance to you in meters. Then dial this distance on the elevation knob's bullet drop compensator on top of the scope and you're good to go. There is also a graduated scale, covering plus/minus 10 mils in 1-mil increments, for windage adjustment above the elevation reticle pattern. Use the tip of the center line in the center of the windage scale as your aiming point. Both the Israelis and Swarovski of Austria have copied this rangefinder reticle pattern.

Some of the early PSO-1 scopes imported with the Romak 3 rifle had an odd funnel-shaped (or inverted chevron) reticle pattern that required matching a target 1.5 meters (4.9 feet) in width with parallel vertical lines corresponding from 100 (the widest pair of vertical lines) to 500 (the narrowest pair of lines) meters. This is purportedly supposed to represent the width of an elk from shoulder to flank. The reticle pattern is illuminated in red.

The metascope — for the detection of infrared light sources — usually found on the PSO-1 scope has been deleted. The optical sight's side mount is integral with the scope tube. The scope comes equipped with a canvas and leather carrying pouch, combination tool, two spare rubber covers for the light switch, a black plastic disc with four threaded holes to retain spare illumination bulbs and an amber filter for increasing contrast on cloudy days. No one knows how to fight in extreme cold weather better than the Russians and the final scope accessory is a remote battery housing with a cable to connect it to the scope's battery housing. The remote housing has a clip that permits it to be attached to inner clothing and thus prevent the battery from freezing. While it comes with the Romak 3 rifle, additional PSO-1 scopes with all their accessories are available for only \$229 each. There is even a version calibrated for the 7.62x39mm cartridge with a rangefinder reticle pattern for ranges out to 400 meters. Intended for mounting on Kalashnikovs in that caliber, it's available for the same price.

We were also sent the latest Russian military sniper scope for test and evaluation. Called the Talon PO 3-9x42, it's a 3-9 power variable scope with an exceptionally sharp image at all power ranges. Equally important, is its simple, but ingenious rangefinder reticle pattern. The center of the reticle contains a graduated scale, covering plus/minus 10 mils in 1-mil increments, for windage adjustment with the aiming point in the center, in a manner similar to that of the PSO-1. Five arrows arranged vertically below the primary aiming point provide elevation holdover for distances beyond 900 meters — out to 1,400 meters. The numbers "3" to "9," with marks in-between, are arranged around the circumference of the reticle together with an index mark at the very top of the reticle. Rotating the power knob on the right side of the scope tube will both power the magnification up or down and increase or decrease the size of the reticle pattern. There is a small vertical rectangle above the aiming point with a horizontal line directly under it. The width of the box subtends 0.5 meter (about 1.6 feet). The distance from the top of the rectangle to the line below it is 1.5 meters (4.9 feet). The length of the box itself is exactly half that (0.75 meter). Determine the approximate length of the target, place it either in the rectangle or with its feet on the line and its head toward the top of the box, then power up or down until the target exactly fits in that space and pull the trigger. It's simple. It works. It's soldier-proof. This exceptionally fine scope is available for \$599, including the usual accessories.

— P.G.K.



Equipped with a Russian PSO-1 4x24mm scope, the caliber 7.62x54R Romak 3 weighs 9.5 pounds and thus the recoil impulse is moderate.

The Romak 3 Sniper Rifle: HOW IT OPERATES

All Kalashnikov rifles, squad automatics and the Romak 3 are gas-operated, without an adjustable gas regulator (with the exception of the caliber 7.62x51mm NATO Yugoslav RPK) and fire from the closed-bolt position. After ignition of the primer and propellant, gases are diverted into the gas cylinder on top of the barrel. The hard-chrome-plated piston, which is an exceptionally long 9.65 inches (245 mm) in the case of the Romak 3/PSL/FPK series to accommodate the gas vent's location farther down the barrel (because of the 7.62x54R chambering), is driven rearward and the bolt carrier, attached to the piston extension, goes through about 8.5 mm of free-travel until the gas pressure drops to a safe level. The piston and bolt carrier are threaded and pinned together with a slight amount of free play that is designed to absorb the initial impact of the recoil impulse. Like all Kalashnikovs, the bolt has three locking lugs. The largest lug, which has a slot cut into it to accommodate the extractor, also has a projection on it that serves as the cam that rides in the bolt carrier's cam path to rotate the bolt 35 degrees to the left to unlock it from its recesses in the barrel extension (and during the counter-recoil stroke to rotate it into battery. Unlike many other designs, the Kalashnikov provides no primary extraction during the bolt rotation. Thus, an exceptionally large extractor claw is required in all calibers. The fixed ejector is part of the left side receiver guide rail. The cocking handle is permanently attached to the bolt carrier and reciprocates with it.

As the bolt travels back it rolls the hammer over and compresses the recoil spring. The bolt group ceases its rearward travel when the carrier slams into the rear end of the receiver. The recoil spring then drives the bolt group forward, another round is stripped from the magazine and chambered, and the bolt then comes to rest. The bolt carrier continues onward for about 5.5mm after the bolt's two locking lugs have engaged their recesses in the barrel extension. The Romak 3's long, multiple-strand recoil spring is wrapped around a two-piece, telescoping guide rod assembly. The front retaining cap permits user separation of the spring and rod assembly. The rear end of the guide rod assembly slides into a notch on top of the receiver's end piece and serves to hold the stamped sheet-metal receiver top cover in place.

The trigger mechanism is based upon that of the U.S. .30 M1 Garand. The hammer has two hooks, and there are two sears: a primary sear on an extension of the trigger and a spring-loaded secondary sear directly to the rear. When the hammer is cocked its left side hook is held by the primary sear. When the trigger is pulled, the trigger extension rotates forward and the primary sear disengages, leaving the hammer free to rotate forward. In semiautomatic fire, when the bolt rolls the hammer back, it is caught at the rear by the secondary sear. When the trigger is released, the trigger extension and primary sear move back to catch the hammer as it is released by the secondary sear. In full-auto, a mode in which the Romak 3 is not capable of firing, a boss (missing on the Romak 3) on the selector-lever axis pin forces the secondary sear back so that it plays no role in controlling the hammer. The trigger mechanism's mainspring is of the multiple-strand type, which lasts longer and offers better performance under adverse conditions. Trigger pull weight on *SOF's* test specimen was 5.75 pounds, and exhibited the horrendous creep associated with all Kalashnikovs.

The auto-safety-sear, which protrudes through a slot in the right receiver rail of almost all selective-fire Kalashnikovs, is not present on the Romak 3. In full-auto, the auto-safety-sear holds the hammer back and must be tripped by the bolt carrier to free the hammer to fire another round. The five-component anti-bounce device added to the trigger mechanism when pinned and riveted, sheet-metal receivers replaced the milled, forged receivers of the AK47 series, has also been deleted from the Romak 3. Its primary function is to prevent firing out of battery during burst fire sequences.

The selector lever, a stamped, sheet-metal bar on the right side of the receiver is manipulated by the thumb and remains, in my opinion, one of the Kalashnikov's few defects. It is noisy, stiff and difficult to operate (although much less so on the Romak 3). There are no selector markings on the receiver body. The top position is safe. In this position, the trigger is blocked, but the bolt can be retracted just enough to see if the chamber has a loaded round. The lower position is for semiautomatic fire.

— P.G.K.

The iron emergency sights on this rifle were taken directly from the Romanian RPK squad automatic. Two ears integral with the front sight assembly (held to the barrel by two pins) protect the round front sight post, which is adjustable for both elevation and windage zero. The sliding tangent-type rear sight has an open U-notch and is adjustable for elevation in 100-meter intervals from 100 to 1,200 meters. The 300-meter battle-sight setting is marked with the letter for "P".

Disassembly procedures for this rifle are exactly those of any Kalashnikov. First remove the magazine and cycle the action by hand several times to make sure no round remains in the chamber. Pivot the scope mount's locking lever to the rear and slide the scope assembly off the receiver. Push inward on the serrated rear end of the recoil spring guide rod assembly and while doing so lift off the sheet metal top cover. Push the recoil spring guide rod assembly out of its retaining slot in the end of the receiver and lift it up and out of the rear of the bolt carrier. Slide the piston/bolt carrier group to the rear and lift out of the receiver after aligning it with the slots in the receiver designed for that purpose. Separate the bolt from the bolt carrier. Rotate the gas cylinder's locking lever (located on the



Russian Talon PO 3-9x42 variable power military sniper scope features a simple, but ingenious rangefinder reticle pattern.

right side of the receiver, just in front of the rear sight) upward until the gas cylinder can be lifted up and away from the barreled action). Pivot the locking lever on the bottom forearm's front bracket upward until you can slide the bracket forward enough so the forearm can be removed. No further disassembly is recommended.

Reassemble in the reverse manner after cleaning and lubrication. Never lubricate either the piston shaft or interior of the gas cylinder. Use the following ComBloc soldier's trick to simply the final reassembly steps. Place the rear end of the recoil spring guide rod assembly just in front of and below its retaining slot in the receiver.

The 7.62x54R CARTRIDGE

The 109-year-old Russian 7.62x54R cartridge has outlived some glorious military contemporaries, such as the French 8mm Lebel, .303 British and U.S. .30-06. Adopted in 1891 for the Mosin-Nagant bolt-action rifle, and also known as the "3-line Mosin Nagant", this supposedly outdated rimmed cartridge is still going strong as a machine gun (PK series) and sniping (Russian Dragunov and Romanian FPK) round. It appears that it will continue to be fielded well into the foreseeable future, as these latter two weapon systems remain in production in several countries and are popular throughout the world.

First bullets for this cartridge were flat-based, round-nosed projectiles weighing approximately 211 grains. In 1908, a 149-grain spitzer projectile with a conical hollow base (which expands to form a gas seal to enhance accuracy in worn barrels) was issued as the Type "L." In 1930, a boat-tail 182-grain projectile with lead-alloy core, designed as a long-range machine gun round, was introduced as the Type "D" (heavy ball - yellow-tipped projectile color code). The current boat-tailed bullet, called the Type "LPS" (light ball- white- or silver-tipped projectile color code), has a mild steel core and weighs about 150 grains. This latter bullet leaves the muzzle at about 2,750 fps. Performance of this cartridge, and the various full metal jacket bullets developed for it, is equivalent to U.S. military .30-06 ball.

By the late 1970s, Type LPS ammunition had completely replaced both the Type L light ball and the Type D heavy ball. As a consequence, it was no longer necessary to color-code the bullet tips and 7.62x54R ball ammunition manufactured subsequent to this time usually, but not always, omits this feature.

Early 7.62x54R case lengths measured 53.5mm. Current types measure 53.65mm in length. The rim diameter is 14.3mm and the head diameter is 12.2mm to 12.3mm. Except for commercial ammunition manufactured by Norma and in Yugoslavia for export to the U.S., the brass, copper- or brass-washed steel or lacquered-steel rimmed cases are Berdan-primed. Cases in this caliber can be

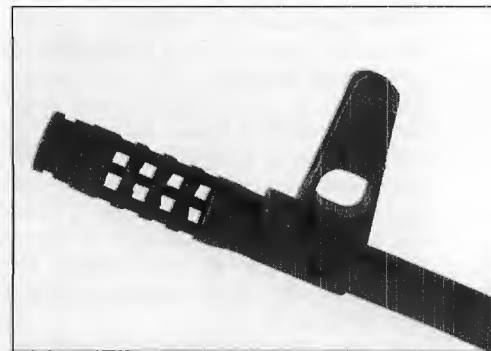
instantly recognized by their peculiar partially convex base contour. Head stamps are found either impressed or raised around the edge of the base. Bullets measure .311 inches in diameter. In addition to either heavy or light ball rounds, this caliber will be encountered with tracer (since 1972 this projectile exhibits a step just forward of the case mouth), AP, API, APIT, ranging high explosive incendiary (HEI) projectiles, crimped blanks for grenade launching, short-range practice ball and drill rounds.

The existence or not of match-grade ammunition for the M91/30 and Dragunov sniper rifles has puzzled cartridge collectors and small arms authorities alike. While I was in Izhevsk, Russia for the 75th birthday of Mikhail T. Kalashnikov, I was told by Alexis F. Dragunov and Victor Kalashnikov, project engineers at the Izmash factory, which manufactures the Dragunov sniper rifle, that match-grade ammunition for sniping is produced at the arsenal whose factory head stamp code is "188". However, only the cardboard box they are packed in signifies that the cartridges are combat match-grade and this arsenal also produces standard ball. Match-grade bullets have apparently been issued in two weights: 200 and 182 grains.

Since 1945, 7.62x54R ammunition has been manufactured in China, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, East Germany, Finland, France, Hungary, Iraq, North Korea, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Syria and Yugoslavia. Prior to World War II, it was also produced in Germany, Great Britain, Mexico and the United States.

Two types of 7.62x54R ammunition were provided for SOF's test and evaluation of the Romak 3 rifle: Hungarian 150-grain Soft Point bullets loaded into a lacquered steel case headstamped "MFS 7,62x54R" and Czech type LPS light 150-grain ball headstamped "bxn 79" and with a silver-tipped projectile color code and gray lacquered steel case. This latter headstamp was the manufacturer's code for the original Sellier & Bellot factory at Vlasim, Czechoslovakia.

— P.G.K.



(left) The skeletonized, wood-laminate buttstock is only somewhat reminiscent of that of the Dragunov. Instead of a removable padded cheekpiece (all too easily lost in the field) there is a swell on top of the stock that serves as an integral cheekpiece. The muzzle compensator (above) is quite effective in reducing muzzle jump, albeit at the expense of a noticeably increased flash signature.

Hold down on the top cover while retracting the cocking handle. The end of the guide rod will jump into the square hole at the end of the top cover and its retaining slot in the receiver.

Evgeniy F. Dragunov used a short-stroke piston not attached to the bolt carrier on his

Samozaryadnaya sniperskaya vintovka Dragunova — SVD sniper rifle because he felt the Kalashnikov's long-stroke operation resulted in the movement of a heavy mass which would jar the weapon and degrade the rifle's accuracy potential.

Our test and evaluation of the Romak 3

sniper rifle did not demonstrate this to be the case. The Hungarian 150-grain Soft Point ammunition with which we were provided consistently shot about 1 MOA groups from the bench at 100 meters. Not quite as accurate, the Czech military ball ammunition was capable of only 1.5 MOA. This is really outstanding accuracy for a Kalashnikov action and perfectly acceptable for a mass-produced, un-tuned semiautomatic sniper weapon system with a four-power scope and horrendous trigger.

When placed in this 9.5-pound package the recoil impulse of the 7.62x54R cartridge, which has a well-deserved reputation as a hard kicker, is moderate. Furthermore, the muzzle compensator is quite effective in reducing muzzle jump, albeit at the expense of a noticeably increased flash signature. The ejection pattern of the empty cases was typically that of the Kalashnikov series, about 5 to 8 feet to the right and slightly forward.

Complete with the scope and all its accessories, both a 5- and 10-round magazine, a green nylon sling, oil bottle, three-piece cleaning rod, AK-type buttstock cleaning kit, trigger lock and plastic storage case, the Romak 3 has a suggested retail price of \$999.95. This is a reasonable price for an accurate and legally importable example of the formally rare Romanian FPK sniper weapon system. ❌

ROMAK 3 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: 7.62x54R.

Operation: Semiautomatic; locked breech; gas-operated with long stroke RPK piston; three-lug rotary bolt duplicating Kalashnikov method of operation; AK-type safety lever.

Weight: (with scope, empty) 9.5 pounds (4.3 kg).

Length, overall: 45.3 inches (1,150 mm).

Barrel: Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 10 inches (254 mm) over 22.4 inches (570 mm) of rifling.

Barrel length: 24.6 inches (625 mm).

Feed mechanism: Five- and ten-round, staggered-column, detachable box-type magazines.

Optical sight: 4X24mm PSO-1 type with battery-powered reticle illumination; field of view is 6 degrees; rangefinder reticle pattern after that of the RPG-7V. The optical sight's side mount is integral with the scope tube.

Emergency sights: AK-type: round front sight post, which is adjustable for both elevation and windage zero; sliding tangent-type rear sight with an open U-notch, adjustable for elevation in 100-meter intervals from 100 to 1,200 meters. 300-meter battle-sight setting is marked with the letter for "P".

Furniture: Skeletonized, wood-laminate buttstock with a swell on top of the stock that serves as an integral cheekpiece. Both the top handguard, which is part of the gas cylinder assembly, and the bottom forearm are of solid wood construction.

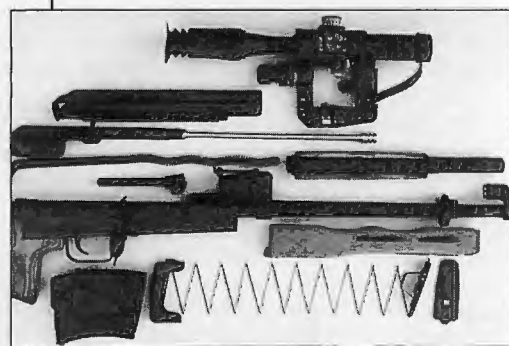
Finish: Black oxide.

Manufacturer: ROMARM (aka RATMIL), Dept. SOF, 48-50 Calea Victoriei, Pasajul Victoriei, sector 1, Bucharest 70102, Romania; phone: +40-1-613 43 66; fax: +40-1-312 29 88.

Importer: Intrac Arms International, Dept. SOF, 5005 Chapman Highway, Knoxville, TN 37920; phone: 423-573-0065; fax: 423-579-0937.

Suggested retail price: \$999.95, complete with the scope and all its accessories, both a 5- and 10-round magazine, a green nylon sling, oil bottle, three-piece cleaning rod, AK-type buttstock cleaning kit, trigger lock and plastic storage case.

T&E summary: The usual Kalashnikov robustness and reliability. Surprisingly accurate for a semiautomatic rifle operated by means of a long stroke piston. Reasonably priced. Highly recommended, especially to military small arms collectors.



Romak 3 sniper rifle system, fieldstripped.

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YOUR ENEMIES ARE REAL

SOF Patrols Lebanese No Man's Land

MARJAYOUN, LEBANON — There's an old Mexican proverb which proclaims that "all of your friends are false; all of your enemies are real."

It's a proverb that the second in command for the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA), Raymond Abu Mourad, should have listened to more closely.

For Abu Mourad is a dead man.

His friends — the Israeli army — have decided they will unilaterally pull out of their self-declared security zone in southern Lebanon, leaving him and the his 2,500 mostly Lebanese Christian mercenaries high and dry. Abu Mourad's enemies — the *Shi'ite* Muslim terrorist group *Hezbollah* — have said that, come Hell or high water, once that pullout takes place, he and hundreds of other SLA members will be executed.

"Welcome to Lebanon," *SOF's* driver/fixer, Abu Abdo, half-jokingly told us as we drove away from Beirut's airport. "Your Marine barracks was over there," he said, pointing to a new cargo warehouse. "They needed the space so they removed what was left of the building. Soon the Israelis will also be gone. Just like the Marines."



A Lebanese woman walks past a billboard advertising Lebanon's first English social magazine, featuring stories on how to cheat on your partner and men's sexual fantasies.

Text & Photos by
Mark H. Milstein

Forty-eight hours in Beirut gave us enough time to get a small idea of what was going on in country, and provided us with a little sight-seeing time to see what damages 15 years of civil war brought to the Lebanese capital. We weren't disappointed.

Beirut's English language paper, *The Daily Star*, had reported that two SLA fighters had been killed the day before when their roadside checkpoint was ambushed by Hezbollah guerrillas just east of Marjayoun, the nominal capital of the Israeli security zone. It was time to head south.

In retaliation, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) had overnight struck a known-Hezbollah stronghold north of the security zone with heavy artillery, killing one civilian and destroying a family house in the village of El Kfair.

Since the SLA didn't maintain an office in Beirut and the IDF weren't encouraging Western visitors to trek south into the security zone, we left the Lebanese capital at dawn not knowing what we'd find once we arrived other than the weather and last night's casualty figures.

The day before Abu Abdo had spent the better part of six hours waiting at the Lebanese Ministry of Defense in Beirut for our permission slips to be issued allowing us to cross the southernmost Lebanese army checkpoint at Kfar Falous, just east of Sidon, into the security zone. A \$50 donation from *SOF* to the Lebanese Army Press Office ensured that six hours didn't turn into 10.

In order to actually enter the security zone we'd have to drive on to Jezzine, where Abu Abdo made a telephone call to the SLA and, while we amused ourselves drinking coffee with some locals, was issued a code number for each of us and the car that we would have to repeat when quizzed at the northernmost joint SLA-IDF checkpoint.

The brown hills covered with stunted pines



(above) Israeli defense force (IDF) soldiers look over the border into the Syrian village of Kumeitra high into the Golan Heights. Negotiations between the two countries continue over the future of the strategic high ground. An off-duty Israeli soldier (left) looks across the Israeli-Lebanon border.

soon gave way to more alpine-like terrain, as we climbed our way up into the 5,000- and 6,000-foot mountains that mark the entrance to the security zone. The snow-capped mountains of eastern Lebanon were clearly visible to our left as we traveled south.

We were the only traffic on the road that morning, passing only three rusting and gutted Soviet-made BMPs and a couple of silver foxes that ran across the road. At one point the road swung over a steep, farmhouse-studded valley and at four strategic curves the SLA and IDF had constructed concrete anti-sniper barriers. While roadside bombs were the weapon of choice for Hezbollah, it was in places like this that they had learned well how to use the Afghan and Iranian-supplied, American-made TOW-2 antitank rockets they used well.

Fallen House Of Cards

The history of Israeli involvement in southern Lebanon basically goes like this: On 6 June 1982, advance columns of Israeli armor crossed the border into Lebanon and began making their way north towards Beirut. Within hours Israeli units began engaging and destroying Syrian army troops and artillery based in southern Lebanon. The Israeli airforce enjoyed immediate air superiority and encountered little resistance.

The Israelis had ostensibly come to rid Lebanon of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), aid the Christian

Phalangist militia leader Bashir Gemayal and somehow put Lebanon's house of broken cards back together again after seven years of civil war.

As *New York Times* Beirut correspondent at the time, Thomas Friedman, once noted in reference to the Israeli invasion, "Lebanon, like any house of mirrors and illusions, is always easier to step into than it is to find a way out of."

Within a week Israeli forces were besieging Muslim West Beirut from 5 miles away on a bluff near the presidential palace at Baabda. As a result the main highway linking Beirut and Damascus, Syria, was for all intents and purposes shut. Beirut was slowly being choked to death by Israeli shells.

By the end of August the Israelis had accomplished — or so they thought — what they had set out to do: The PLO were driven out of Lebanon, Gemayal was in power and soon peace between Beirut and Jerusalem would be at hand.

Things then went from bad to worse. On 13 September 1982, a car bomb exploded in Beirut killing Gemayal, thus once and for all crushing any Israeli hopes or dreams of peace.

A month later Phalangist militia, under the protection of the IDF, massacred hundreds of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila camps in West Beirut. The Israelis were now occupying a house on fire. The civil war raged all around the Israelis and there seemed nothing they could do to stop it.

One year later, the Israelis began their unilateral withdrawal from northern Lebanon. The first phase saw the IDF leave the comfort of the Shouf Mountains overlooking Beirut and consolidate their positions along the Awali River in Shi'ite-controlled southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese Shi'ites had at first seen the Israelis as "friends" of sorts. It was, after all, the Israelis who had liberated the Shi'ites from the wrath of the mainly Sunni Palestinian guerrillas who had occupied

southern Lebanon to use it as a platform to shell Israel and launch guerrilla raids.

However, when the Shi'ites realized the Israelis had no intentions of leaving, but instead were planning a long-term occupation and were setting up a security zone to protect Israel's northern border, the Shi'ites turned on them with a vengeance. The Israelis then compounded the situation by hiring local militiamen and forming an army of mercenaries — the SLA.

The SLA claims about 2,500 fighters, 70% of whom are Shi'ite with next of kin in Hezbollah. The SLA's officers are primarily Christian with some Druze thrown in for good measure. Because most of the SLA's foot soldiers are Shi'ite and their officers Christian, tension within the army is quite high and a high number of defections taking place every year — sometimes with disastrous results.

The SLA is made up of two regimental (Eastern and Western) regional battalions, armor and artillery elements and a training corps including a local security force and civil affairs group.

After more than a hundred kamikaze-like attacks, dozens of roadside bombings, missile strikes, air raids, artillery barrages, hundreds of casualties and 17 years later, the Israelis were ready to finally pull out of Lebanon. *SOF* was there.

IDF observation posts and firebases began appearing shortly after the first checkpoint — where we were met by an Israeli intelligence officer who verified our names, passports and ID numbers and then gave us two white license plates with red letters and numbers to place over our Lebanese plates. The Beirut tags would be no good where we were heading, but our newly minted SLA-IDF plates would surely identify us as possible Israeli collaborators if we were stopped by Hezbollah.

Insanity Plates

Putting the SLA-IDF plates on our Renault sedan was sort of like back in high school when someone would tape a sign on someone's back reading "Kick me," except this time it wouldn't be a shoe being shoved up our asses but a 7.62mm slug from a Kalashnikov.

Twenty minutes and two SLA checkpoints later we were sitting in the warm confines of Radio Reve, 103.9 FM, the "voice of southern Lebanon." Radio Reve was run by a former Lebanese dentist turned journalist by the name of Doctor Ali Dia.

Dia was under the direct control of Israeli army intelligence, we surmised, or he wouldn't have lasted five minutes in this part of the woods, much less be given the go-ahead to start up a radio station.

Everyone in the security zone, it seemed, was working for the Israelis. Everyone, it also seemed, had a cellular telephone except for us. We were warned not to bring ours along because it would "be dangerous for our health."



The Israeli-Syrian frontier at the edge of the Golan Heights in northern Israel. Negotiations between the two countries continue over the future of the strategic high ground.

We suspected the real reason was because the IDF didn't want us calling anyone with real-time information that could cause a security problem.

Dia told us that we would be "better off" if we took on the services of a colleague, a local fixer by the name of Roger (pronounced *Ro-jay*). For a \$100 per day, we could draw from Roger's storehouse of information on the area as well as overnight lodging in the house he shared with his wife and three boys. It was also a convenient way for the SLA and the IDF to keep tabs on our intentions and to control what we photographed.

First stop was El Khyam, a small village east of Marjayoun, where the SLA had set up a prison for Hezbollah POWs.

We asked Roger if we could go in, but he quickly squashed our request on security grounds, saying that "it would cause problems." We then asked Roger if it was OK to just photograph the outside of the prison, he shot back a terse "No." How about if we go a little further away and photograph it? "I don't know," Roger said, "Let me ask."

After quick telephone call to some SLA-IDF liaison officer, Roger said we would be allowed to go to a "friend's" house and photograph the prison from the roof. We agreed. The friend, it turned out, was an Israeli army intelligence officer who checked our IDs and then walked us to the roof of the apartment house and watched us very closely as we made photographs of the prison from about a half-mile away.

We next asked Roger to take us to a SLA training base in Kfar Chouba, just north of the 1974 ceasefire line. "No. That's not possible," Roger answered. "Impossible for you to see our training base."

We then peppered Roger with questions about the SLA and its future with limited results. That was, until we made it worth his while. "The average soldier is paid \$360 per month," Roger told us. "No one here really loves the Israelis. We love their money."

Roger said that most SLA soldiers also had family members who had "green cards" allowing them to cross into northern Israel every day and work at Israeli farms and factories for good money.

"They take care of us, but we are professional soldiers," Roger went on. "If the Israelis leave, I don't know what we would do. A lot of people would be in economic trouble, and a lot of blood would flow."

We asked Roger about the threat of Hezbollah retaliation, but he just shrugged it off.

"I'm not worried," Roger nervously answered. "If they come here, I will fight, but I don't think they will come. Look, there are even some Muslims in the SLA. Would Hezbollah kill one of their own?"

We knew the answer, but rather than dwelling on death we thought it best to head over to an IDF fire base just north of the famed Beaufort Castle, west of Marjayoun.

There we found elements of the Israeli Golani Brigade.

ISRAEL SELLS OUT ITS ALLIES

As we go to press (23 May), the Israelis have already begun their withdrawal, and many SLA Muslims are simply surrendering to Hezbollah. Israel has not announced any concrete plans for asylum or protection of SLA militia members, even as they flee in the face of a Lebanese army push to the border. Israeli considerations of granting one-year work visas have not yet materialized.

Just as George Bush encouraged, conned, then blew-off, the Kurds, Southern Lebanon appears set for its own lethal edition of treachery to one's noble former allies featuring Israel and the hapless "refugees" of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) who've sided with, bled for, and died for Israel, but who'll likely be abandoned to twist precariously in the breeze as the Israelis split their AO for home and hearth.

Then, who'll be left to protect the some 2,300 SLA remnants — and their families, mostly Lebanese Christians — from their

vengeful Hezbollah adversaries?

Ephraim Sneh, the Israeli Deputy Defense Minister, has turned thumbs-down on any possibility that Israel will accept members of its allied militia as refugees for possible resettlement inside Israel, stating that "I do not believe that the solution is to turn those people into refugees. They are Lebanese patriots. They have been fighting for their lives and for their independence against all foreign troops. They should stay in their homes on their land, in security. We are committed to their security. How exactly we implement this commitment I prefer not to say in these early stages."

A good lesson to remember is that America — and any of her most favored nations — are not above ruthless betrayal. My advice to hedge any bets would be to ship the SLA a generous supply of bodybags, then hope like hell the Israelis are more humane than was Mr. Bush.

— Tom Reisinger



Hundreds of supporters of an Iranian-backed Hezbollah cleric protest in front of United Nations headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon against the mistreatment of more than 30 Lebanese men currently in Israeli prisons. The protesters enacted a street theater symbolizing their claims of Israeli mistreatment of the Lebanese prisoners. The young children of one of the detainees (right) holds a photograph of their father. (below) Israeli soldiers guard the border crossing between Israel and Lebanon. Israel maintains nearly 3,000 troops in Lebanon as a bullwark against Syrian-backed Hezbollah guerrillas.



"You like our fence?" an IDF lieutenant who called himself Gabi asked us. "It's for the missiles the Hezbollah like to use on us. We haven't been hit yet, but ... who knows?"

Gabi was referring to the 40-foot-tall chain-link fences that surrounded every IDF base we saw in southern Lebanon. The fences were purposely flexible and were meant to tangle the guide wires trailed by TOW-2 missiles favored by Hezbollah guerrillas.

Gabi led a platoon of soldiers from the Egoz Reconnaissance Unit of the Golani Brigade, an elite unit charged with seeking out Hezbollah positions in the security zone.

"I can't go into any detail about what we are doing here," Gabi told *SOF*, "but I think you know quite well that Hezbollah is a formidable enemy, one that we don't take lightly. He's smart. He knows just about our every move. He's well-armed and disciplined. It can be scary sometimes."

Gabi then showed us around the firebase, and we spent sometime at an OP looking over the countryside.

Gabi said that he and his men were looking forward to the IDF withdrawal.

"Look, last year we lost 13 IDF soldiers in Lebanon. The year before it was more than 20," Gabi said. "Peace is good. If, of course, it's a real peace. The Syrians haven't yet said they would reign in



Hezbollah. If that's not accomplished, then it's not peace."

Gabi said he didn't know what would happen to the SLA mercenaries once the IDF withdrew, but he could certainly imagine.

"Our government has talked about giving them asylum, but there hasn't been any official word on that yet. No one knows the details of how many SLA fighters would be allowed in or not."

We then asked Roger if we could go to a SLA base or checkpoint and ask some soldiers what their opinion of the IDF pullout was.

"That's impossible," Roger answered.

We then told Roger that if that was the case, there was no further need for his services and that we would immediately return to Beirut.

A half-second after digesting our ultimatum, Roger was on his cell phone blabbing frantically in Arabic and waving his hands around the car as if someone had wrapped a plastic bag over his head and wanted it there for keeps.

"Drive west to Marjayoun," Roger yelled. "I will tell you where to go."

Threatened with the loss of a \$100 per day in income, Roger had called someone within the SLA to see what could be done to satisfy us and keep us from leaving before he milked us for whatever we were worth.

We soon pulled up to a small, nondescript house just off of Marjayoun's main street. Roger went inside, and within minutes returned to the car with a more worried look on his face.

"What's wrong?" we asked.

Roger mumbled something in Arabic, then said we'd have to go to the base for further information.

Our car hadn't gone more than 5 feet before Roger told us that he'd just tried to speak with the second in command of the SLA, Raymond Abu Mourad, but that he wasn't home. Stunned, we looked at each other, wondering if Roger knew how much he breached secu-

Continued on page 71



COLOMBIA

In The Ring

PART I

Bogota Wages Counterinsurgency On Several Fronts

Counterinsurgency (COIN) invariably involves a dynamic that is as unpredictable as it is dreary. First, violence directed at the system surfaces. The system, caught unawares, turns to its own instruments of violence — the police and the military — and orders them to respond.

They do so in blunt fashion, thus making the situation worse. The result, of course, is that society sinks deeper in a spiral of ever-increasing chaos.

A few people see the light and point out

Text & Photos by
Dr. Tom Marks

that the rough edges of the system itself have produced insurgency, which the government invariably labels “terrorism.”

Yet the insurgent terror is not the campaign itself, as is the case with true terrorism — it is instead a political campaign to mobilize the disaffected and the dispossessed, to mobilize them in an alternative

society. Until it can actually liberate areas openly, this takes the form of covert infrastructure.

Always, unless the insurgents are incompetent — which is the case with startling regularity — their ultimate goal in deploying power is to create and safeguard this alternative to the society that they are overthrowing.

Governments, to finish our discussion of this dreary spiral, go after that which they can see, insurgents with guns, leaving the insurgent infrastructure virtually alone to

grow and become ever more deadly. The security forces thus seek to “close with and destroy the enemy,” while the insurgents continue the process of successively dominating areas.

What makes it so difficult for systems to see their way clear is that the people in positions of authority are those who have benefited from what is. They’re comfortable with the way matters are, understand them, can’t figure out why anyone would expect them to be otherwise. And even if they allow for the possibility of disaffection, they’re expecting Robin Hood and his Merry Men to break from the forest and storm the castle. They’re certainly not expecting a war in the shadows.

Down Colombia Way

The bottom line is that society sends its security forces out to do what they get paid to do, arrest folks; and, if necessary, crack some skulls. The rhythms of life go on — until the brutal reality of war intrudes.

This is what has happened in Colombia, which has become the third largest recipient

of U.S. aid, trailing only Israel and Egypt. Just as Manila had its Huk Rebellion, followed by its insurgency of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP), the second conflict rising from the ashes of the first, so Bogota has seen the survivors of an earlier 1959-65 conflict resurface as the communist insurgents of *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, or FARC.

A communist insurgency in 2000? People who actually believe the discredited drivel about socialism and the good life to come — if only they can build a society like the Cuba of Castro? *You better believe it!*

For decades they’ve been “out there,” out of sight, out of mind, patiently building an alternative society. No one much cared.

For there are two Colombias: One, roughly 40% of the country (see map), is west of the Cordillera Oriental, mainly high country. The other, east of the mountains, the llanos, is savannah, vast plains, and Amazon, the jungle. More than 96% of the populace lives in the first area. The other 4%-minus, and key insurgent formations, are in the second zone.

As long as the guerrillas were revolutionary homesteaders in areas no one else wanted, the government bothered with them only when their actions forced a response. It was the job of the police and the military, went the logic, to keep an eye on them.

Yet FARC had big plans. In a key meeting, its seventh party conference, held at Cubarral, Meta, 4-14 May 1982, it was decided that the priority task was to create a revolutionary army capable of taking on the security forces.

A Ready War Chest

To fund this endeavor and to gain manpower, FARC opted to exploit the world lust for narcotics. This was the new element in the process outlined above.

By taxing all facets of the drug trade, it would obtain money. By protecting and controlling production areas, it would not only secure its income but recruit from among the marginalised.

“The goal was the creation of a 28,000-man army divided into 48 guerrilla fronts,” notes Dave Spencer, a veteran of both the El Salvadoran and Colombian conflicts, now one of the top U.S. specialists on the insurgency. “The purpose of this army was to take advantage of what FARC saw as the existing political contradictions and take the inevitable political collision that had to take place within the system.”

In other words, FARC recognized that Colombia’s democracy was flawed, that it had produced both winners and losers. In particular, it tended to be a very dangerous place for those who advanced left-wing solutions to society’s problems. An earlier effort at coming in from the jungle, for instance, had left an estimated 600-1,200 militants victims of assassinations (there is no agreement on the numbers; some sources place the number as high as 2,000).

Precise blame was rarely fixed. Having suffered through previous bloodshed in which leftists had played a prominent role, Colombian society abounded with those more than willing to go after those who still dreamed of Marxist liberation.

Still, the perception grew that advancing left-wing positions in open forum was hazardous to one’s health. And that which could not stay within the system, worked from outside it to bring it down.

“The important point,” continues Spencer, who is regularly in-country, “is that nearly two decades ago, FARC identified the principal source of its finances and recruitment base, both of which have proven crucial to their development up through the present.

“Just as important, FARC, based on its experience, concluded that peace negotiations were a government strategy to weaken or destroy the guerrillas. And they decided that FARC presence at the negotiating table was not considered an alternative to building a revolutionary army.

“They view the negotiating process as a means to gain official concessions that they either cannot gain on the battlefield, or can



Gateway to South America, strategic Colombia comprises the northernmost range of the Andes mountains, and the headwaters of the mighty Amazon River.



Operating from bases in the "demilitarized zone" it won not through combat but at the negotiating table, FARC launched attacks in all directions in mid-1999.



The massive offensive from the DMZ in July 1999 was followed by another in November, but the offensives were stopped cold, with heavy casualties inflicted upon the insurgents. Bodies are laid out, because civil law still requires that deaths be validated by coroners' inquests.



Recent FARC offensives even included homemade — but effective — armor, as they escalated from guerrilla activity to mobile warfare, with their sights set on conventional warfare.

gain on the battlefield only with much difficulty. Simultaneously, they view the battlefield as a means to pressure concessions at the negotiating table. They have consistently refused to negotiate from a position of weakness."

A Mushrooming Cloud

Though FARC considered the negative aspects of its approach, especially its links with the drug trade — then, mainly coca, now, also heroin and marijuana — it was hooked. The payoff was simply too great. The money and the manpower thus gained allowed FARC to mushroom.

"In 1982 FARC was just a small organization of 15 fronts with maybe 2,000 guerrilla fighters," says Spencer. "By 1990 it had expanded its forces to 43 fronts with about 5,000 fighters. Now it has between 15-20,000 combatants in 60 fronts and mobile companies [these formations range from 60 to 400 individuals]. This has allowed them to move to mobile or maneuver warfare, the use of large units capable of directly confronting military units of equal size, of overrunning military installations and smaller units."

There is considerable irony here. For decades the dynamic outlined earlier went on. The marginalised allowed the insurgent movement, FARC, to exist. The government, faced with any number of insurgent movements, none of which were particularly powerful, but which together constituted a significant problem, told its security forces to deal with the rebels.

Though the government would at times — generally when enlightened or ambitious personalities appeared — move towards some sort of resolution, grievances embodied in marginalisation were never structurally addressed. Development was controlled by an elite, as was politics, and bringing the margins into the mainstream simply was beyond the mind set, and perhaps the capacity, of the system.

This would have remained more a moral issue than one of practical politics were it not for the shot in the arm provided to FARC by drugs. Led throughout by a single individual, Manuel Marulanda Velez, alias *Tiro Fijo* or "Sure Shot," FARC put its money into its bite and caught the government in 1996-98 still in counter guerrilla mode.

In a series of actions throughout those years, FARC demonstrated that it had entered the mobile warfare stage. Though coordination was effected in 1995 with Colombia's other major insurgent group, *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional*, or ELN, the new war was principally a FARC show.

Modern communications equipment, especially the use of cell phones, allowed a high degree of both tactical and operational coordination. Simultaneously, Colombia itself was hammered by the United States, which decertified the country in both 1996 and 1997, thus denying it aid and advice even as the insurgents moved to exploit weaknesses in security force organization, doctrine, and deployment.



Responding to misguided U.S. pressure, last summer the Pastora government sacked three of its top generals, all veteran COIN commanders — (above) BG Uscategui (II Division CG); (center) BG Millan (War College director); and (right) BG del Rio (COLAR director of operations) — over alleged past links to “paramilitaries.”



Conventional, And Mobile, Tactics

A harbinger of what was to come was the overrunning, on 30 August 1996 at Las Delicias, in Putumayo, of a draftee company base of 120 men, killing or wounding half, capturing the remainder. There followed other actions, often coordinated with demonstrations by coca growers in municipal areas.

Concurrently, a stepped-up campaign sought to clear entire areas of government presence. Mayors and policemen were particular targets, for once they were killed or driven away, a region became ripe for control. Special attention was paid to areas that would serve to isolate the national capital, Bogota. Urban militias were formed to multiply the combat power of FARC fronts themselves.

Just how far FARC had progressed was brought home in late February 1998 when the under strength 52nd Counter guerrilla Battalion (52 BCG) of the newly formed 3rd Mobile Brigade (3 BRIM), deploying only 154 men in three of its companies, was lured into a prepared ambush and decimated at El Billar, Caqueta.

As the Colombian presidential election

campaign went on in August 1998, FARC launched a nationwide series of attacks. The most significant saw an estimated 1,200 insurgents attack a draftee company of the Joaquin Pais Battalion and the co-located counternarcotics police base at Miraflores, Guaviare. Overrun, government forces again took heavy casualties: 30 killed, 50 wounded, and 100 taken prisoner.

Anxious to act upon popular sentiment for “peace,” the president-elect, Andres Pastrana Arango, personally met with FARC leaders, then ceded to them, on a “temporary” basis, as the price for entering into negotiations, a demilitarized zone (*Zona de Distension*).

Centrally located in the heart of the country, within easy striking distance of both the capital and other major targets, it was ostensibly an area where military activity was prohibited. FARC not only violated such prohibition immediately, but subsequently used the DMZ, as it came to be called, as a coca-production base and recruiting zone, as an unsinkable aircraft carrier from which to launch repeated strikes against government targets.

This activity reached a new high in July 1999, when a massive offensive from the DMZ sought to strike in all directions, to include at Bogota itself. It was followed by another in November-December, but both were stopped cold in fierce fighting which involved security forces knocking out FARC’s homemade but nonetheless formidable armor.

Security Force Response

That the offensives were blooded stemmed from significant changes which had occurred in the security forces, primarily the army, even as the insurgents were making headway.

“We were caught by surprise, because we had American doctrine,” analyzes a Colombian general. “The American approach taught us there were two types of

As in any insurrection, the Colombian Army was called upon to respond to the escalated attacks. Draftees such as these were among the three-quarters of the army limited, by law and regulation, to point defense rather than COIN ops.





war, conventional and unconventional, what you call 'war' and 'other than war' (OTW).

"This is a mistake. This is your view, but it is not correct for us. Actually there is only one conflict, going from guerrilla war through mobile war to conventional war.

"It's all integrated. And we must be able to fight at all levels.

"By labeling this as a 'nonconventional' war, you Americans see it as a guerrilla war. You see the main weapon as the patrol against guerrillas. You call for us to decentralize.

"Yet that's what we were doing, and we got caught in the counter guerrilla mode when the enemy shifted to the mobile mode. You call upon us to decentralize when increased command and control is more important than ever.

"It is what the guerrillas are doing, integrating all of their forms into a unified plan of action, with guerrilla attacks coordinated to support mobile action, with terror supporting guerrilla action."

After more than three decades of small-scale, counter guerrilla operations, then, the Colombian security forces were quite unprepared for this sequence of events. The police, a national organization (*Policia Nacional*), though roughly 100,000 men, were spread throughout the country in small posts from which they engaged in the routine associated with law enforcement as opposed to warfare.

The armed forces, too, in their disposition, resembled the dispersal of the U.S. Army during the Indian Wars rather than an organization geared up for mobile warfare. As had been the case in the Wild West, the army (*Ejercito*) had a plethora of company cantonments and rarely conducted operations of even that size. The air force (*Fuerza Aerea*) and the navy (*Armada*) were both small.

Naturally, it was the army that was expected to blunt the insurgents. Of its total 140,000-man strength, however, less than a quarter, some 30,000 men, were being used in actual counterinsurgency operations.

These were professionals, all volunteers.

The remainder were short-term conscripts, nearly three-quarters of whom did not even have a high school degree. They were effectively prohibited by the government from anything save point defense.

The result was that the force in the field was not only grossly inadequate but was deployed in such fashion as to ensure defeat in detail. This is precisely what happened during the 1996-98 period.

The Changes Of Necessity

Change did not come immediately.

Some 30,000 men — professionals and all volunteers — carried the war back to the insurgents in 1999 — with appreciation of the fact there is a difference between counterinsurgency and combat.

General in the Colombian system) Fernando Tapias Stahelin became head of the armed forces (*Fuerzas Militares*); General Jorge E. Mora Rangel became head of the army itself. Both were former commanders of the elite mobile brigades (BRIM). Under them, the army was reorganized for combat.

That there is a considerable difference between "combat" and "counterinsurgency" was appreciated.

"Now that we understand what is happening, we have been able to respond," continues the general just cited. "Yet the crucial question is how to control the ground. In our system, everything is prohibited. If you even attempt to uncover the infrastructure, much less dominate areas, you are violating something.

Colombia's essential counterinsurgency problem thus lies in the fact that the country is not engaged in fighting its own internal war. The business has been left to the military — all too predictable a stance given the mindset of a system so long at "peace," with so many problems (such as the narcotics trade and a murder rate which produces twice as many bodies as America, which has some seven times Colombia's population!).

Just how Colombia went full circle from the reasonably effective defense activities of

"We are in the position of fighting for a system unwilling to defend itself."

Indeed, Pastrana's first defense minister, Rodrigo Lloreda, who has since died of cancer, resigned rather than go along with what he saw as the administration's drift in its counterinsurgency policy. In fact, at the same time, every army general officer, save one who could not be reached since he was in the field on operations, tendered his resignation.

Such a rough start, though, was overcome. The resignations were refused. Then, with a combination of rotation due to seniority, some out-of-sequence appointments, and plain good luck, Colombia put together a command team that began to turn things around. Though police and military were co-equals in the Public Forces (*Fuerzas Publicas*) under Defense Minister Luis Fernando Ramirez Acuna, it was the army which was key.

Army Lieutenant General (called simply

the 60s — carried out with our aid — would take a study all to itself. Suffice to say systemic inertia, mixed with the regular sacking of key officers in order to establish who was "really" the boss, resulted in a security framework which was effectively neutered.

That it was able to rally was because there have long existed in Colombia, as in any number of countries faced with internal violence, two armies. One is seen by the press (theirs and ours), in the capital mainly; the other fights and is little covered or understood.

It was the latter which assumed control of the fight in Colombia.

The first task was to shake the five divisions which comprised the Colombian Army (COLAR) out of garrison mode. Looking at a map of the country and moving clockwise, from the northwest corner,

these divisions were I, II, IV, III, with V in the center, Bogota and vicinity.

When Washington Stumbles, Bogota Falls

The area where FARC combat power was centered, as well as its financial base (narcotics growing and production), was the IV Division Area of Operations (AO). It was the AO where the significant defeats outlined above had in the main been suffered. This key appointment went to a soldier's soldier, another former BRIM commander, Brigadier General (BG), now Major General (MG), Carlos A. Ospina Ovalle.

Other such appointments followed, and the effect was electric. It was at this point, however, that the confused priorities of the United States got in the way. In mid-1999, responding to direct U.S. pressure, the Pastrana government sacked three of its top generals, all veteran COIN commanders — BG Fernando Millan (War College director), BG Rito Alejo del Rio (COLAR director of operations), and BG Jaime Humberto Uscategui Ramirez (then II Division Commanding General, or CG) — for alleged past links to the banned “paramilitaries.”

Paramilitaries, of course, are what in other countries are called “militia.” No counterinsurgency can be won without them, for they are the only way in which domination of areas can be carried out. Yet in Colombia, as part of the 1990-91 settlement with another insurgent group, M-19, a prohibition was written into the constitution against armed bodies operating outside of the armed forces and police.

Rather than dealing with this in straightforward fashion, as has every other system fighting internal war, by mobilizing anti-insurgent “people’s war” as military auxiliaries, the Colombian political and judicial systems have fumbled and done nothing. They have then blamed the security forces when the vacuum created in the vast country has been filled by the autonomous counter-guerrilla groups which have sprung up everywhere — and continue to do so.

By refusing to work with Bogota to find an approach to popular mobilization which will work, Washington has made the situation much, much worse. Indeed, it has demanded that the military spread itself still more thinly by “going after” yet another foe — the paramilitaries — and that the police be increased in numbers.

“How the Colombian police came to be regarded as the darlings of the U.S. Congress and the alleged paragons of civic virtue is yet another story that needs to be written,” wryly observes a Canadian analyst who has done extensive work in the history of the Colombian conflict. “Allowing that they have come a long way under the leadership of General Rosso Jose Serrano does not detract from the point.”

The bottom line, though, was that the United States became directly involved in the actions which led to the three generals’ sacking — this in an army of but some 35 generals — for reasons which remain controversial and had as much to do with inter-

nal U.S. and Colombian politics as they did with reality. In so doing, the United States crossed a line. Its presence is now both more conditional and tenuous than perhaps even the U.S. Embassy realizes.

Refinement Of Military Response

There will be another line drawn concerning the proposed American \$1.7 billion aid package, which has as of this writing passed the U.S. House but become bogged down in intra-Senate political wrangling. This line will have to do with what the United States demands as the *quid pro quo*. Too many strings will not lead to the rejection of the package — Colombia’s politicians want important components of it, such as its counternarcotics package — but it will likely lead to the creation of yet another military within the military, a special “drug-fighting” component.

This, in a sense, has already happened, as I have discussed in recent articles for *Soldier Of Fortune*. It mirrors what we did in El Salvador, where we created a military within a military — and, in my opinion, got the war won that way.

But there we had the aim of winning the war, of helping El Salvador. In Colombia, we have no such aim. We’re in the fight for our own domestic concerns; our aid package helps us, not them — and they know it.

In next month's conclusion, Senior Foreign Correspondent Dr. Tom Marks, a former infantry officer and West Point graduate, analyzes what it will take to bring the conflict in Colombia to a successful resolution, and notes positive changes within Colombia's military which, combined with appropriate government response and U.S. aid, may effect this end. ✕



High and tight, Colombia's mobile brigades are good troops that, given the mission and the go-ahead, can beat FARC in a conventional war. Notes one general, however, “In our system, everything is prohibited ... we are in the position of fighting for a system unwilling to defend itself.”



Three times during the mid-'90s — while the dogs of war were active in Angola and Sierra Leone — Al Venter went into Sierra Leone and Angola with Executive Outcomes, a South African mercenary organization. As we go to press, the author is heading back to the ravaged country. He recalls the nine-day battle for Freetown which ultimately drove Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels back into the jungle interior. This was the same bunch of insurgents who came back late 1998, after EO had left this tiny west African state and following the ousting of the British organization, Sandline International, by Westminster. Thus was Sandline prevented from stopping the awful carnage that followed. The following is the first in a two-part series.

Arthur Walker is the only man ever to have twice won the South African *Honoris Crux* (HC) in gold. He earned his spurs in Angola while flying Alouette helicopter gunships. Most South Africans who were active in the military reckon this decoration for extreme valor in the face of the enemy to be the rough equivalent of the British Victoria Cross or, possibly, the American Medal of Honor. It might just be, for no other reason than South Africa, during 21 tough years of border conflict, was astonishingly reticent with its awards. Any HC — bronze, silver or gold — was regarded by those who were there as just recognition of high courage. Also, it says something that only four or five HC (Gold) were ever awarded and Walker took two of them.

Walker won't say whether it was courage or luck, but he concedes that it was possibly a healthy dollop of the latter. It was no walkover. FAPLA, the Angolan army, he says, might have been no match for any first-class Western army, but throughout, they were powerfully supported by a host of foreign forces including Cubans, Vietnamese, East Germans and Russians together with an array of their armor and air power.

Eventually, with Moscow's help, Luanda achieved air dominance of sorts over the South African Air Force (SAAF). Near the final stages of this bloody conflict, South African Mirages were simply no match for the versatile MiG-23s, which the opposition hurled at them in numbers. Though no South African jets were shot down, they were forced to vacate Angolan airspace because they couldn't match the Soviet air-to-air missiles with which the MiGs were equipped.

The air war then entered a tentative stage and peace followed not long afterwards. Throughout, SAAF and Puma helicopters managed to evade enemy air patrol, often by a whisker, but, as he says, it wasn't all

Business end of the lone Mi-24 gunship that the Sierra Leone government bought from East European arms dealers to counter rebel advances. Its electronics were eventually sabotaged by Russian technicians. That came after the Moscow boys lost the contract to a South African merc force to defend Freetown.

Freetown

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

Free-Lancers

Merc Pilots Over Sierra Leone



that difficult because Angola is such a vast country, "big enough to swallow armies." There are few people aware that this huge West African state is as big as France, Germany and Italy combined.

In all, South Africa lost about 700 of its soldiers during the course of its border wars, including some of Walker's friends and wingmen. Curiously, those who survived are surprised he is still alive. Speak to him over a beer and one is left with the impression that this is a man who has rarely entertained the possibility of defeat. He has just never considered death to be an option. Yet, he estimates that in the Southern African sphere of operations (which briefly also included Rhodesia) he had been in more than 50 actions. Throughout, he never suffered more than a bruise even though he constantly came under fire.

Lean and tough and not yet 40 when I last stayed at his Pretoria home, Walker had a clear and professed predilection for things that moved fast, cars and aircraft included. He also enjoyed good American bourbon, and lots of it, in the old days.

Following the accession to power of President Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress (ANC) in the early '90s, Arthur Walker stayed in the SAAF only long enough to see Ronnie Kasrils, a card-carrying communist and a protégé of the Russians, take over as Deputy Minister of Defense in Pretoria. It was a serious loss for the SADF, but who cared? The ANC and its cadres were running the show and, anyway, Walker had opposed them from the start.

The reason for his pulling out of the SAAF, as he told me, was simple. He had fought long and hard against those who allied themselves with the ANC in many Southern African wars. When the Pretoria-based mercenary organization Executive



(above) Russian technical crews servicing one of the Mi-17s on its return to base HQ at Aberdeen which lay on the eastern fringes of the capital. (left) South African sidgunner onboard Mi-17 prior to take off from Aberdeen military HQ. 10. (below) Sierra Leone's forbidding jungle terrain as seen from one of the Mi-17s. This was all but impossible country in which to launch an effective counter-offensive. (bottom) One of the merc force's two Mi-17 all-purpose gunships. When not providing top cover, they were hauling equipment, ammo and odds and sods like the author into the remote interior, where a different kind of war was being fought against the rebels.



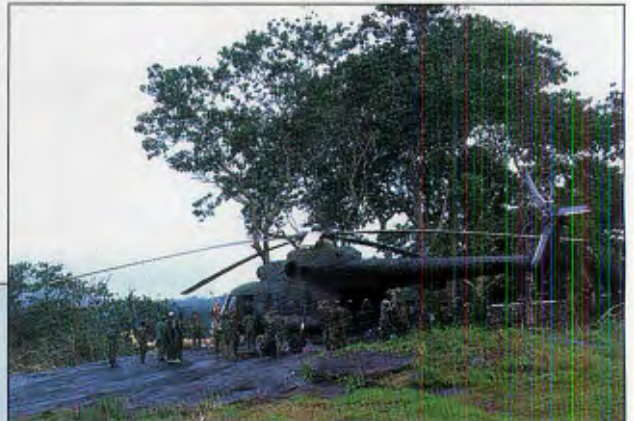
Outcomes began to recruit pilots with combat experience, one of the first of the bush war veterans that it approached was Walker. There were also Carl Alberts, Charlie Tate, 'Juba' Joubert, Lourens Bosch, Sonny Janecke, J.C. Linde and a few others, some of whom are no longer alive. All were invited to join EO. Most did because the money was good. In any event, in South Africa just then — with the transition from white rule to black taking effect — things were tough and there was work for them "up north."

For 11 months, during much of 1994, Arthur Walker together with a group of mercenary soldiers and airmen hired by Executive Outcomes, fought for the duration of a bitter, extended Angolan campaign that eventually forced Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA rebel leader, to the negotiating table in Lusaka. Taking the Cafunfo diamond fields in the north-east of the country was only part of it. It was a classic counterinsurgency strike across primitive terrain where the attackers sometimes had to build their own bridges across the many streams that

im, they had achieved very little: Their idea of close-quarter top-cover for government forces under fire in the jungle below, was hovering somewhere between 2,000 and 5,000 feet and letting go at random at targets that were mostly imagined.

Usually the Hind was parked on an improvised heli-pad in the compound of the Sierra Leone Military Headquarters at Aberdeen on the eastern outskirts of Freetown. Or it could be seen on the apron at Lungi Airport across the bay from the capital. Like new, it had originally cost about \$5 million and came with a fairly liberal supply of munitions and spares. The

(below) One of several Nigerian air force Alpha jets used against the rebels in Sierra Leone. The author was arrested by the Nigerians after taking this picture. (right) This improved hilltop chopper pad was used by my mercs as an intermediate stopover during the campaign.



straddled this primeval land adjoining the Congo. From the start, they had to carve their own roads through the jungle and as they made them, Savimbi mined them. The contract to provide a besieged Sierra Leonian government — then exchanging blows with the RUF — with a similar guns-for-hire force — followed soon thereafter.

Fun, Profitable Combat

Suddenly, Walker was again doing what he liked best — flying combat helicopters in primitive lands. He and Carl Alberts, another veteran of the Angolan conflict, crewed together. They converted from the Mi-17 gunships they had been flying in Angola to the single Russian Mi-24 (Hind) combat helicopter that Freetown had bought on the international arms market. Their instructor was a much-decorated Russian who had completed several tours of duty in Afghanistan, the affable Colonel Nikolai Kagaku.

"Nice chap," said Walker. "Tough and very professional," he declared.

The Mi-24 was already there when the South Africans arrived. Until then, it had been flown by a group of Russian freebooters who had been hired earlier. In the inter-

American AH-64 Apache, by contrast, costs five or six times that and any accouterments are extra. Consequently, the Russian-built helicopter was a bargain. Or was it? Serious problems developed once the Belarussian technical staff (who arrived in west Africa as part of the deal) sabotaged the helicopter's electronics in a bid to ground the South African. Their own people had been put out of business once Freetown signed a contract with Executive Outcomes.

From the start, recalls Walker, it was dangerous work. "We were called on almost immediately to give close-air support to our own forces who were often surrounded. We struck at the rebels where we found them. Trouble was, the enemy was just about everywhere: Some had taken up strong positions on a row of heavily foliated hills overlooking the city." At that point — in the euphoria that surrounded the arrival of the South African "liberators" — few were aware that the rebels were only two or three hours' march from Sierra Leone's long-abandoned Parliament.

Titanium Bath

Says Walker: "There were moments when

we were literally on top of them. Ground fire came up at us all the time: nothing big — a lot of RPG-7s, LMGs and AKs — but it was heavy and we were hit several times. If it wasn't for the "titanium bath" in which completely surrounded the cockpit, I'm pretty certain we mightn't be here to tell the tale. Anyway, because of the triple-canopied jungle terrain, retaliation from the air was difficult. They could see us but we were blind to anything in the jungle below where much of the fighting was taking place."

Much of the activity that took place was centered on an area immediately to the east of Waterloo, one of Freetown's outlying suburbs

and not far from Aberdeen, which was also home to Sierra Leone's RSLMF military headquarters. The surrounding area was a rain forest so dense that it could easily have hidden a squadron of tanks had they had them.

Drunkard Rebels

"But they didn't, which was why we routed them in the end," said Walker. Basically, as he explained, they were fighting groups of rebels clustered together, usually 50 or 60 of them in a succession of improvised platoons. They had the numbers, he said, but they were still fragmented and as the day wore on they started passing the gin around. Then they almost totally lacked cohesion. "All this indicated inadequate training and obviously, very little in the way of effective command. Still, they had guns and they could fight," Walker said.

"Rarely would the rebels split into smaller sections and that sometimes made things impossible for us in the air. Often we were 'talked' down on to targets by our own people on the ground, who might have made contact or been ambushed. Then we'd be scrambled and, once over the contact area we'd perhaps follow a smoke flare down or follow radio instructions.

"Obviously, a lot depended on our being able to relate clearly to our own guys who were defending or attacking on the ground and, when things went well, it wasn't long before it was almost like old times. We'd fought together before and that was when the Angolan experience really counted." As Walker tells it, opposing enemy forces were sometimes less than 100 meters away from their own lines.

"Once, when some of Simon

Witherspoon's men were almost surrounded — they were caught in a small defile on a hillside and couldn't move — Walker and Alberts came to the rescue. Witherspoon had found that whichever side his people probed, they came under powerful fire. Also, they were outnumbered. After a couple of hours of attempted extrication, they were almost out of ammunition."

Because both sides were almost within sight of each other, a traditional hot extraction — with an Mi-17 in the hover over the battlefield — would have been impossible. It would certainly have been shot down.

A former member of South Africa's crack Reconnaissance Commando, Witherspoon came on the radio and spoke to Walker who was making broad circles over the battle area.

"He had me visual but I couldn't see him. So he talked us down. It was a slow, deliberate process, until we were almost directly above him.

"When he asked me if I could see a small crossroads at about 11 o'clock, I replied that I could. 'Below me and to the left,' I answered. Witherspoon reported that he and his group — there were perhaps a dozen of them — was holed up in a clump of bushes on the other side of the road. Meantime, he said, the rebels were in deep overgrown foliage a couple of hundred metros to the north. It couldn't have been clearer."

Full-Auto Extermination

Walker put his four-barreled 12.7mm gatlings in the undernose turret on to full-auto and sprayed the target area. End of story.

"That was the first big success of the war for us. Radio intercepts that night spoke about 30 kills. The men were chuffed!"

Firing at the enemy — with their own forces directly below — wasn't a simple matter. One of the problems which faced the gunship pilots from the beginning, was that an Mi-24 spat out a lot of brass, most of it 12.7mm. And since the cyclic rate of its gatling was about 4,000 rounds a minute, that meant that a lot of casings rained down on the men below, especially while hovering directly above." In that heat the boys on the ground couldn't — and wouldn't — wear helmets, not that there were any to be had in that godforsaken country," says Walker.

"So, if these hot chunks of metal hit someone, injuries could be pretty serious; several ounces of metal dropping at speed from a hundred meters or so, can easily crack a man's skull. Consequently our attack direction and profile had to be exact," he reckoned.

It is significant that things changed markedly towards the end of 1998 when the next RUF invasion out of Liberia which took place a few years later. The consequences — because there was nobody around to guard the fort — were truly horrific.

This time, with Libya's Colonel Qaddafi picking up the tab, another group of South African freelance fighters had been hired by Monrovia's President Charles Taylor and made responsible for training. These free-



From left, in front of one of the Mi-17 gunships, Carl Alberts, the local sidegunner and ground commander Colonel Hennie Blaauw. (left) Merc pilot Arthur Walker living under somewhat primitive conditions in West Africa.



force jets. Andy Brown, then deputy commander of Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone, popped into the pilots' Ready Room about noon one day and asked whether they could go up immediately. "They'd had an intercept that sacks of rice and other supplies were being delivered to a rebel camp about 70 kilometers miles away; one group of gooks resupplying another," said Walker. The Nigerians were also scrambled.

Frag Bombs

The Nigerians and the South Africans timed their RV. It was agreed that the Mi-24 would 'talk' the fighters onto the target where they would do the necessary work with their 250 kilo fragmentation bombs. Once these had been released, the gunship would try to pick off survivors. Intercepts confirmed later that there had been six confirmed kills and some wounded, most of whom — in that heat — would also die.

Walker: "The Alphas came in fairly high. Normally their attack profile involved dropping their bombs from about 5,000 ft AGL; and given the sort of problems encountered — cloud cover, lack of visibility on the ground — it was all quite accurately done," he explained. "Still, the bombs landed 150 yards from the sacks that we had spotted through the trees."

It was clear that the South Africans were impressed with their Nigerian counterpart "jet jocks," as they referred to them. All were British trained. In bearing, speech, attention to detail and briefing sessions, Walker felt that if you closed your eyes, they could easily have been wearing RAF uniforms.

It hadn't been the first time that Alberts and Walker worked with Nigerian Air Force personnel. In an earlier attack in June, headquarters at Murray Field had pin-pointed a fairly big rebel camp in the hills beyond Waterloo. A combined Mi-24 and Alpha

booters commanded elements that attacked across the border. Neill Ellis — a former EO pilot and one of the few expatriates left in Sierra Leone at the time where he flew a lone Mi-17 gunship — says that their South African accents in radio intercepts were unmistakable. Also, the tactics they employed were straight out of old South African training manuals. In the subsequent onslaught, the rebels completely overran Freetown. They murdered and maimed tens of thousands of innocents, in hundreds (some say thousands) of cases, cutting off childrens' hands and feet "just for the hell of it!" The world community is now trying to pick up the pieces.

Alberts and Walker would sometimes toss a coin to decide who was going to drive the gatlings. To them it was a almost game. Walker is candid that he looked forward to action each day. In operations against the rebels — when they knew there would be contacts — both preferred manning weapons systems to sitting at the Mi-24's controls.

"Looking down those sights was good," said Walker. "The rebels had killed many innocents and just then we were the only ones who were able to retaliate and we did it well." He capped his comment with an evil smile.

Later that week Walker recorded details of a strike that involved the Nigerian air

Continued on page 74

The Education of a Company Commander

What They Don't Teach In Basic

by Major Richard Culver, USMC (Ret.)

The following are extracted from a rather eventful combat tour in Vietnam during 1967. I hadn't thought of many of these occurrences for a number of years, until I was recently rereading Murphy's Laws of Combat. Some of the stories below are told tongue in cheek, some are deadly serious — but all of them are true.

Lives For Real Estate

It was the spring of 1967 and I used a camouflaged sweat rag to wipe my face. We were standing in the middle of a village, now in wreckage from the constant carnage of war. It was the second time in as many weeks that we had been through the same village. The constant fighting for the same terrain on a weekly basis was beginning to wear thin. I called for the company XO, Lieutenant Mike Chervenak, to come up, and he was soon standing beside me.

"Hey Mike, do you get the feeling we've been here before?"

"Yeah, Skipper, and before you came we'd been here several times before that!"

"Is it just my imagination, or does this

strike you as a bit stupid? Using 'high-diddle-diddle' tactics to take a piece of terrain we're gonna give back tomorrow strikes me as idiotic!"

"You've got that right, Skipper — we take the same piece of terrain almost on a weekly basis only to walk off and leave it to the gooks!"

I think that moment in time changed my tactical appreciation of the war to win the hearts and minds of the people. I vowed never again to deliberately trade lives for real estate. This wasn't Belleau Wood, nor was it Saipan or Iwo Jima. We had become a "beat cop," essentially making the streets safe from the Commies. While the VC and NVA were getting a bit edgy about showing

themselves, they seemed to know exactly when and where we were going to be. I became a believer in leveling the objective with artillery and air before walking in to sweep up the results.

Lesson: Use supporting arms to avoid needless loss of life. Getting bled to death by Ho Chi Minh's followers using obsolescent tactics bordered on insanity.

High Angle Fire

My introduction to the horrors of high angle fire was one that probably saved a number of lives by making me one cautious *muvva!* It was during Operation Hickory during the May/June time frame in the DMZ. The idea was to land next to the Ben Hai River (the dividing line between North and South Vietnam) and drive the NVA south into the waiting arms of the "White Mice," South Vietnam's National Police.

At the time, I was the Commanding Officer of Headquarter and Service Company of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment, a job I cordially hated. I was constantly working my bolt to be assigned as a rifle company commander.

Can you spot future company commanders? As in the Corps of old, the modern USMC maintains its traditional standards.



I had supervised the initial sending of supplies ashore from the *U.S.S. Princeton*, and was chafing under my ignominious job. Once I had satisfied myself that all was well aboard ship, I bummed a ride on the next CH-46 heading for the beach. Instead of a fire swept landscape, I found a barren hill-top with the Battalion antenna erected and a frustrated battalion staff that had just watched most of the NVA swimming the river back to North Vietnam. The Battalion was busy digging in.

I reported to the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel "Pappy DeLong," who understood my desire for a rifle company, and chuckled when he saw that I had wangled my way to the field. "Moose" Beard, the XO, was not as amused. The Moose had told me to stay aboard ship and make sure nothing was being sent ashore in a nonexpeditious manner. Moose wasn't really as upset that I wasn't aboard ship as he was that I was taking advantage of Pappy's good nature! Pappy, understanding soul that he was, gave me a half-hour to look around while Moose fumed.

A flight of CH-46s set down in the LZ, disgorging the expected White Mice. They had, of course, timed their arrival until the LZ had been reported cold. Their sudden arrival, however, was to change all that, as our O1-E Artillery spotter aircraft was running low on fuel and had to return to Dong Ha. Choppers on the LZ were an absolutely irresistible target for the NVA gunners, who had been chafing under the threat of counter-battery fire directed by our spotter. A CH-34 landed in the zone a moment or two following the CH-46s. I wandered over to talk to the CH-34 crew chief to see if he would drop me off on the *Princeton*. The noise of the chopper effectively blocked out any meaningful conversation, but the crew chief's eyes were suddenly the size of saucers! He pointed aft to the area behind the CH-34, waved and "by-by." The chopper whirled away and I looked rearward to see what was upsetting the crew chief: A large cloud of dirty black smoke — incoming fire!

The major complication was that the NVA had some large bore artillery positions just across the river, and were simply waiting for the spotter plane to leave. Although we were sitting on the hill like ducks in a shooting gallery, our saving grace was that several platoons were conducting patrols that mercifully left a number of empty holes open to the fastest men.

I dashed for the nearest hole, identified by a poncho erected with several branches to act as a sunshade. The hole was shallow and about 4 feet long, offering minimal cover from shrapnel. Executing a slide that would have done justice to Ty Cobb, going in "spikes up," I arrived simultaneously with another gent. With our legs intertwined, what could I do but introduce myself.

"My name's Culver."

Afternoon. I'm Doc Jones."

Miracle of miracles! A Navy hospital corpsman.



courtesy author

Maj. Dick Culver. "... to take a piece of terrain we're gonna give back tomorrow strikes me as idiotic!"

Lesson: *All* high angle fire is evil, both enemy and friendly. I have found many uses for friendly high angle fire, but all of the darned stuff has "To whom it may concern" written on it. Friendly artillery is only slightly less evil than the enemy stuff — and both will kill you!

Don't Bunch-Up!

The corpsmen were rapidly triaging our wounded, getting them lined up for the medevac choppers to fly them to the *Princeton*, but the casualties began to bunch up, apparently figuring that lightning never strikes twice in the same place. This began to worry me so I went to the head of the line and gave them the standard lecture that one round would get them all. I told them to put 7 yards interval between them and assume a prone position. They looked at me with a dazed look like I must have lost my mind! These guys were acting crazy, apparently somewhat shell shocked from the bombardment! I began taking them individually by the arm and stepping off 7 extremely long

paces between men, using language that I had first learned at my Drill Instructor's knee! The men seemed lethargic, but finally did as they were ordered.

Lesson: Don't always depend on senior NCOs to have their stuff wired together after taking 200 rounds of incoming 122s. Not everyone is John Wayne.

Doin' The Foxtrot

The Moose motioned me over. "Well, Culver, looks like you are gonna get your wish — the Foxtrot Company Commander got blown off the hill and has been medevaced. You go in for Foxtrot! Just go with the Gunny here, he's from Foxtrot and he'll take you up to check out the company positions!

Lesson: Be careful what you wish for.

Assumption Of Command

It was getting dark when I arrived at the Foxtrot position where the Company Gunny gave me a tour of the lines. Finally, the Gunny deposited me at the former Company Commander's hole and told me it was all mine.

Spreading out my poncho in my inherited fighting hole, I took off my gear in expectation of getting a couple hours of sleep, but due to the suffocating heat, I chanced the option to sack out outside. The brush bordering the perimeter seemed a bit too close to my hole for my tastes, but everything appeared quiet. I hadn't been laying there for more than 10 minutes when I heard a *Swoosh, Swoosh, BAM, BAM*. A couple of large explosions rocked the night — and worse yet, the concussion came from the hole I had just climbed out of.

I carefully investigated what was left of my hole and found that some dink had thrown two Chi-Com stick grenades in to welcome me to the area! Luck was with me that night however, as both grenades blew apart on the seams of the cast metal bodies and simply made a loud noise. Dawn revealed that my predecessor had dug his hole within 15 feet of the jungle underbrush — the jungle underbrush which was Foxtrot



DoD (Marine Corps)

Marine riflemen move a pair of Viet Cong suspects to an interrogation team. Note Marine with camera shooting the incident.



Three VC amigos rendered ineffective by Nam Marines.

Company's forward perimeter.

Lesson: Never assume that your predecessor knew what he was doing when he laid in the company positions!

Lesson: Always pick the location of your own fighting hole!

Lesson: Always take command of a rifle company during daylight!

Rules Of Engagement

The "rules of engagement" had been explained to us upon arrival in country: "Thou shalt not fire upon any hostile forces until they fire on you — *first!*" This seemed a bit asinine when first mentioned, but upon being introduced into the intricacies of the reality of the conduct of war, it became apparent that this was some sort of game played by our State Department and the Communists of North Vietnam. Specific instances of restraint could then be paraded before the United Nations. However, it was played, it amounted to gambling with the lives of the Marines (and soldiers, of course) attempting to free the citizens of South Vietnam from the rule of the Communists. Little did we know that the war was actually a game designed to enrich certain friends of the Chief Executive of the United States (The Brown & Root Construction Company and several chopper manufacturing outfits) and to advance the careers of high-ranking military officers who were able to bite their tongues and follow the direction of their masters. Only those willing to lick the boots of McNamara and Johnson were allowed to play! Ambassadors were changed like socks in order to obtain one that would bend to the will of the president. All of these machinations, of course, were detriments to the troops in the field.

I had early on decided that I wasn't about to let some ridiculous "Don't fire unless fired upon" rule lessen my or my troops' chances of making it home in one piece. As it turned out, others before me had made the same decision. One particularly onerous order prevented the calling in of artillery or air support on a village complex

that was not delivering heavy automatic weapons fire on your position (the definition of heavy automatic weapons fire was open to interpretation).

The standard *modus operandi* for a thinking company commander depended upon his ingenuity. My personal method can be deduced from the following (somewhat simplified) radio transmission following a burst of fire from a village we were assigned to take. Several rounds had been fired into our position to get our attention, but I rather imagine that it would not have come under the definition of "heavy automatic weapons fire".

"Arty, this is Hotel Six, over."

"Hotel Six, send your traffic, over."

"Fire Mission, one round HE, coordinates 12345678 (bogus coordinates of course) over."

"Hotel Six, our map shows a village at those coordinates, are you taking heavy automatic weapons fire? Over."

Pointing at one of my M60 gunners who was standing by and a rifleman who had a functioning M16 (unusual), I snapped my fingers. Substantial bursts emanated from both weapons.

"Arty, did you hear that? If you want more, I'll put the gooks on the hook, over!"

"Roger, Hotel, I heard the fire! On the way, wait!"

The Artillery and Air folks knew what was going on and were simply looking for an excuse to support the infantry with air strikes and artillery fire.

Fast Forward To Iran

If I'd been in charge of the Marine Security Guards in Tehran in 1979, I'd have personally shot the guards who didn't blast the camel jockeys attempting to storm the embassy. Allowing the State Department to call the shots once the ball has opened is crazy! My Marines and U.S. Citizens come before political decisions. I would also have had Tehran leveled to about ankle-high rubble. The Marines and State Department employees know the risks, and should be

willing to abide by them when threatened. The Ayatollah was intent on taking Iran back to 10th Century Islam! I'd have bombed 'em back to the Stone Age and would have obliged the followers of the Ayatollah by leaving the city in rubble! Other cultures understand power but do not respond to diplomacy, which they consider weakness. I would never leave any doubt in the minds of those who would screw with the United States. Needless to say, I have never been contacted for duty with the Department of State!

Lesson: Fight your own battles according to the scenario dealt to you by the situation. The lives of your own folks are more important than the lives of the enemy. *You* are the individual on the ground and you were charged with keeping your Marines alive. You owe nothing to the State Department, only to your men, your Country and the Constitution of the United States! Let the diplomats of the world pound sand!

River Crossing Under Fire

We were operating independently, doing a sweep of an area known to be rife with constantly marauding VC, not totally unlike the Indians in the American West. Now, river crossings are always a challenge when you are forced to execute the maneuver without the benefit of boats. A prudent commander always had a 120-foot rappelling line with each platoon along with a fair length of parachute cord. We were so equipped, and we had our marauding Indians. Our stream was about 15 feet deep and about 60 yards across, but we had it handled. The only challenge was a way to get our crew-served weapons to the other side of the river without taking them out of action or getting them soaked. Obviously some "poncho rafts" were called for. We set up half of our mortars to cover the other bank and covered our crossing point with M60 Machine Guns. After appointing a *volunteer* to swim the river with the light-weight length of parachute cord, he handily swam to the other side. We had attached one end of the parachute cord to a length of rappelling line. Once our stalwart volunteer was on the other side, he pulled the rappelling line to his side of the river and secured it to a tree. Tying the other end to a tree on our side completed the rope bridge. Brush rafts were constructed with native underbrush and ponchos and tested for their ability to support a load.

Half of our mortars and machine guns were loaded aboard the rafts and pulled to the other side while the guns and mortars on our side of the river supplied cover for our crossing troops. There was only one fly in the ointment, a VC rifleman who had positioned himself on a high bluff across the river and well above our landing spot. Mercifully, he couldn't shoot worth a damn but we, of course, returned fire with mortars, machine guns and rifles but he was

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Don't Blame America For "The Killing Fields"

Cambodia's Forgotten Anniversary

by Stephen J. Morris

Amid all the recent Vietnam remembrances, the 25th anniversary of Cambodia's fall to the Khmer Rouge passed almost unnoticed. Perhaps there's a reason.

On April 13, 1975, five days before the Khmer Rouge takeover of Phnom Penh, *New York Times* Cambodia correspondent Sydney Schanberg wrote that for the "ordinary people of Indochina ... it is difficult to imagine how their lives could be anything but better with the Americans gone."

Only a few days later, with communist troops emptying the city at gunpoint and Mr. Schanberg in temporary refuge at the French Embassy, he began experiencing some doubts. Still, it would take many years — full of undeniable accounts of mass executions, starvation and disease — before Mr. Schanberg and his fellow antiwar journalists, academics and lobbyists would admit that a holocaust had taken place in Cambodia. When they finally did, their primary concern was to find a suitable explanation — one that fit their own antiwar sentiments — as to why this horror occurred.

Two Questions

There were really two distinct questions about the Khmer Rouge: First, why did they come to power? Second, why did they behave with such extreme cruelty?

On the first question, the explanation that came to be taken as gospel truth was made popular by British journalist William Shawcross in his 1979 book, *Sideshow: Nixon, Kissinger and the Destruction of Cambodia*. Mr. Shawcross attributed the Khmer Rouge victory to U.S. bombing campaigns. The Khmer Rouge were insignificant, he claimed, until the U.S. upset the delicate and peaceful equilibrium of Cambodia to pursue questionable military objectives in South Vietnam.

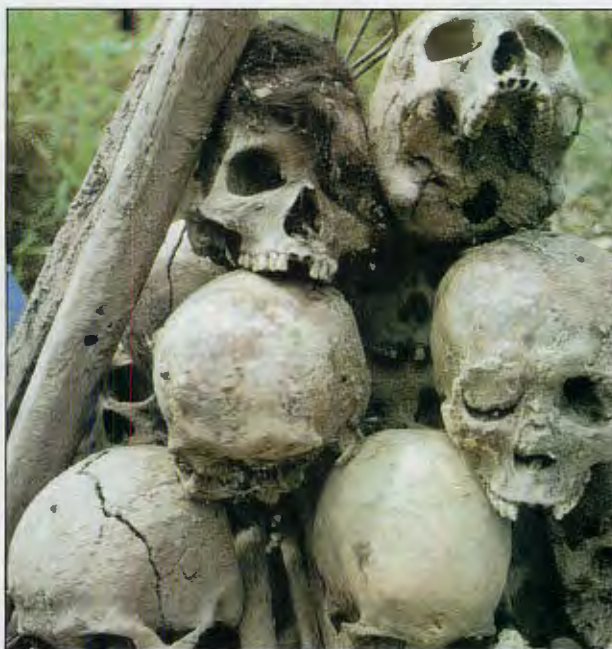
This view held that the U.S. "secret bombing" of 1969 first destabilized the neutralist government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk. More widespread bombing, especially during 1973, then supposedly destroyed the Cambodian social structure. As a result, the Khmer Rouge were able to recruit more followers.

There are several problems with this explanation. First, it was not U.S. bombing that caused the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk

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and brought the Vietnam War to Cambodia. It was the Vietnamese who, with Prince Sihanouk's agreement, occupied Cambodia and violated its neutrality in the early 1960s.

Ultimately, the unpopularity of the occupying Vietnamese with all levels of Cambodian society contributed to the suc-



SOF Archival/Edward Russett

cessful, bloodless coup of March 1970 against Prince Sihanouk. Even before that coup, Prince Sihanouk realized the problems his pro-Hanoi policy had caused, which is why he told Lyndon Johnson's emissary, Chester Bowles, that he wouldn't denounce U.S. bombing of North Vietnamese positions in Cambodia, so long as Cambodians weren't killed.

Second, while the possible effects of U.S. bombing on Khmer Rouge recruitment have never been quantified, they would have to be measured against the tremendous losses of manpower the Khmer Rouge suffered by accurate American strikes. Such a study has never been done and probably never could be done.

Third, after the legal government of Cambodia, led by Lon Nol, ordered the Vietnamese out in March 1970, Hanoi turned its hardened troops against the inexperienced Cambodian army — a month

before the U.S. sent in its own troops. It was Hanoi's forces that crushed Cambodia's main units during 1970-71 and then placed in power in the Cambodian countryside the cadres and soldiers of what would become Pol Pot's regime.

After the North Vietnamese withdrew most of their superior combat troops in 1972, the Khmer Rouge victory was never certain, as even Mr. Shawcross concedes. But the end of U.S. air support on Aug. 15, 1973, and the cutback of all U.S. aid (forced by an antiwar Congress) in 1974-75 gave the Khmer Rouge a huge advantage. The group also continued to receive military supplies from China via North Vietnam.

This leads us to the question of why the Khmer Rouge behaved so brutally after they came to power. Again, the popular explanations assume both the moral purity of the antiwar movement and the iniquity of U.S. policy. The most popular theory is that it was U.S. bombing that drove the Khmer Rouge out of their minds. The initiator of this theory was Richard Dudman of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, although it has many adherents. It was given wider currency by the film "The Killing Fields," in which the Schanberg character utters this explanation.

Yet this theory is inconsistent with the facts. The Vietnamese and Laotian communists were bombed with equal intensity and for much longer than the Khmer Rouge, yet their brutality was much less.

Moreover, the killing that took place in the Khmer Rouge "liberated zones" before 1975, and in the entire country after 1975, was systematic and clearly part of a program of social transformation that was planned ahead.

The Khmer Rouge was a communist movement whose leaders deeply admired the tyrannies of China's Mao Tse-Tung and North Korea's Kim Il Sung. The Khmer Rouge leaders wanted to create the purest form of communist revolution the world had ever seen. They had no patience with the long-term task of "reforming" intellectuals; it was much simpler to eliminate them.

What underlay the Khmer Rouge's excessive ideological ambition was a need to prove themselves more "advanced" than the

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Coup d'etat In Miami

The Rule Of Law

by Junius



Donato Dalrymple, fisherman who rescued Elian Gonzales after the boy's mother drowned in her attempt to flee Cuba, holds boy in closet of Miami home of Lazaro Gonzales, moments before the pre-dawn raid by federal agents on 22 April.

Photos: Alan Diaz/AP/Wide World Photos

The Clinton Administration, and its supporters, attempted to justify the forcible seizure of little Elian Gonzalez from the home of his Miami relatives by invoking "the rule of law." Columnist Thomas L. Friedman, writing in the *New York Times*, stated that he loved the picture of the federal agent pointing the H&K MP5 submachine gun at Elian's rescuer, fisherman Donato Dalrymple (Friedman, apparently, did not see what the rest of us saw — that the gun was also pointed at a six-year-old boy). This picture, says Friedman, shows "what happens to those who defy the rule of law and how far our government and people will go to preserve it." Clinton was quoted by columnist Linda Chavez: "When all efforts failed, there was no alternative but to enforce the decisions of the INS [the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service] and the federal court, that Juan Miguel Gonzalez should have custody of his son. The law has been upheld, and that was the right thing to do."

With all of this talk about "the rule of law," it might be instructive to examine what sort of law they mean, and how it is to rule. First, look at the phrase which Friedman uses — "our government and people." I find it curious that he makes a distinction between the government and the people of the United States. This sort of phrase is frequently used in Communist Cuba, where banners proclaim the unity of the "government and people."

In Cuba, of course, as in other totalitarian regimes, there is a distinction between the government (Fidel and his flunkies) and the people (everyone else). Here, however, it is used to be different. Even liberals would speak of "the people" when referring to some accomplishment of the government. I remember, when I was in the sixth grade, reciting the preamble to the Constitution, which begins with the words "We the people of the United States ..." The distinction which Friedman sees in the photograph between the government (the agent in combat gear, holding a submachine gun) and the people (the



In second frame of sequence taken by AP stringer Alan Diaz, MP5-wielding Border Patrol Agent enters bedroom of Elian Gonzales.



In third of seven-frame sequence, Dalrymple clutches Elian as agent raises gun, reaches for boy.



rescuer holding a terrified child and hiding in a closet), is chilling. Set aside, however, any thoughts about the appropriateness of the force used. If the government had only sent one social worker to knock on the door and demand Elian, what law was being enforced here? It was not, as Clinton said, a court order. The government had requested the Eleventh Circuit Court to grant custody to Juan Miguel — and the Court *refused*. In fact, the Court's decision may be read to imply that Juan Miguel should not have custody until the case was resolved, since it ruled that Elian had a right to ask for asylum.

Since Juan Miguel was living in the home of a Cuban diplomat, if the boy had been returned there the asylum question would have been moot.

The INS did not have the authority to make a custody decision, and had conceded as much when, shortly after Elian had been rescued, it agreed that it would abide by the order of the family court in Florida. The family court awarded custody to Elian's great uncle, Lazaro. When Castro said that he wanted the boy returned to Cuba, the INS changed its mind. It is not clear, however, that INS had any legal authority to change its mind. It can decide whether Elian may have political asylum, and if he is denied, they may deport him to Cuba. But as long as he is here legally the courts of the state where he is found, Florida, have the final word on custody. Of course, Elian is here legally because the asylum issue has not yet been decided.

Thus, for the time being, custody had been decided. If Juan

Miguel wanted custody he could have gone to Florida and petitioned, in the same court, for a change of custody. Of course, in custody cases the predominate rule is to decide on the basis of what is in the best interest of the child. Since Juan Miguel claims that he wants to return to Cuba, it is not clear that a court would have found that to be in Elian's interest. In fact, a credible case could be made that it was not in his interest. When Elian was in the hospital, recovering from his ordeal at sea, he asked cousin, Marisleysis, to stay with him and many experts believe that he has bonded with her as a substitute for his mother, whom he saw sink beneath the waves on the open sea in their escape attempt. Final custody had not yet been decided and the Miami relatives had been granted temporary custody.

In any case, if INS were going to switch custody, to whom could it lawfully be given? To the father? That raises a question which the Clinton Administration, and the lawyer Gregg Craig, have not addressed. How do we know that Juan Miguel is Elian's father? The birth certificate which indicates this *was issued after Elian was rescued*.

What happened to the original? Remember that Elian was born nearly two years after Juan Miguel had divorced Elian's mother. Given the gravity of the situation, would it not have been prudent to do a DNA test? If the results had been negative, then the game would have been over, and Elian could stay with this Miami family. If Juan Miguel turned out, in fact, to be the father, then he could



Agent spots cameraman Diaz; Dalrymple turns from muzzle of submachine gun.



Agent addresses cameraman, and Dalrymple darts past him, carrying Elian from line of fire.

have continued to seek custody, although his status would have been that of a mere sperm donor. In many jurisdictions, his claim for custody would not be automatically granted. In any case, the government of Cuba has been quite open about the fact that the government, not Juan Miguel, would have custody.

Thus, there was no good legal reason to take the boy, and many good legal reasons not to take him. Still, the Clinton Administration decided to take action. Were its actions legal? According to two of America's foremost constitutional legal scholars, Alan Dershowitz and Laurence Tribe, the answer is no. The Justice Department waited until all of the Judges had gone home for the night, and then sought a search warrant from the magistrate on duty. In the affidavit for the search warrant the agents swore that Elian was an illegal alien (he was not — his claim of asylum was pending) and that he was being concealed at Lazaro's home — a curious form of concealment, since he the entire world saw him, daily, playing in the yard.

Shortly after the raid, Justice official Eric Holder claimed that they didn't need a warrant. Then they explained that they had the search warrant. However, as legal scholars point out, a warrant to search is not a warrant to arrest. And a warrant to arrest must be based upon some crime.

The only order which would have justified the raid would have been an order transferring custody to Juan Miguel, an order which the Justice Department was denied two days earlier by the Eleventh Circuit. Thus, there was no legal reason to take the boy, and there was no legal authority to do so.

What about the level of force — was that excessive? This is a question on two levels. First, there is the question as to whether any force, at all, was necessary. Second, there is the question of whether, assuming that some force were needed, the level of force employed was excessive.

There is serious doubt that it was necessary to use any level of force. There were negotiations going on and the negotiator, Aaron

Podhurst, stated that an agreement was close.

The Justice Department said that the Miami family kept "moving the goal posts." Podhurst, however, said that it was the Justice Department which kept moving the goal post. In any case, the Justice Department had consistently insisted that the Miami family agree that at the end of the appellate process, that they would surrender custody of Elian, and agree not to seek custody. Even if they were to win in court, Reno wanted them to agree to give up what they were fighting for.

In other words, the Miami family was cooperating and negotiating in good faith. There was no urgent need to transfer Elian to Juan Miguel, or to remove him from the Miami family. There was no legal authority to take action which required entry into the home — a "search warrant" does not permit the agents of government to take individuals into custody. Therefore, no level of force, even the most minimal, was warranted. The level of force used, however, was not minimal.

Clinton had promised Florida Senator Bob Graham that there would be no middle-of-the-night raid. There was no reason for any raid, yet they went in with full military gear, smashing the front door, cursing the

adults and threatening to shoot them, and terrorizing the little boy. Such invasions, unfortunately, have become common. Usually they take place without cameras to record the event. Fortunately, photographer Alan Diaz was present to record this "dynamic entry." One may readily agree that the use of military force reduces the risk of violent resistance. However, one may ask, how great, under most circumstances, is the risk of such violent resistance, and what is the price society must pay for the acceptance of the technique of "dynamic entry?" During the '50s, the period of the movement which liberals call "McCarthyism," it was widely believed that Communists were plotting a violent overthrow of the United States government.

Whatever one may think of the investigation of domestic



Dairymple hands Elian over to female federal officer at bedroom door, who hustled boy out of camera view, to a waiting van. If not the rule of law, at least the rule of law-enforcers and law-usurpers had been upheld.

Commentary

The extraordinary, extralegal steps taken by the Clinton administration in this child custody case have evoked a great deal of commentary among legal scholars, and the Fourth Estate. Below are some selected quotes:

In an op-ed piece in the New York Times, Harvard professor of constitutional law Lawrence H. Tribe asked: ... Where did the Attorney General derive the legal authority to invade that Miami home in order to seize the child?

The fact is, even on the assumption (which I share) that under applicable legal and moral principles Elian should ultimately be reunited with his father, the government's actions appear to have violated a basic principle of our society, a principle whose preservation lies at the very core of ordered liberty under the rule of law.

Under the Constitution, it is axiomatic that the executive branch has no unilateral authority to enter people's homes forcibly to remove innocent individuals without taking the time to seek a warrant or other order from a judge or magistrate ...

Either way, Ms. Reno's decision to take the law as well as the child into her own hands seems worse than a political blunder. Even if well intended, her decision strikes at the heart of constitutional government and shakes the safeguards of liberty.

In a letter to the editor of the New York Times, Ronald E. Bogle, of Raleigh, N.C., wrote: As a former state court judge, I am truly

ashamed of the actions of the government [from the NYT front page story of 24 April]. If you have ever wondered about the terror experienced by those living in a police state, the seizure of Elian Gonzales should strike fear in the heart of every American.

Recognizing the difficulty of the issue, the court's intent to resolve it made forcible removal unnecessary and unwarranted.

If it was truly the rule of law that motivated the Justice Department in its relentless quest to return Elian to his father, it would seem that it should have welcomed the opportunity to vindicate its single-mindedness in the courts.

In a letter to the editor of the *Washington Times*, former executive editor of the *New York Times*, A.M. Rosenthal, succinctly noted: *Every U.S. official and lawyer of the administration involved in the Elian Gonzales case, from the president on down, is guilty of withholding evidence. Not one of them said in any statement, document or appearance before the public that if Elian's father did not demand that his son be returned to Cuba he would face 14 years in bestial prisons if he ever set foot in Cuba again. That would be a separation from Elian hideously longer than if the boy remained in America and father and son given unlimited visiting rights by U.S. authorities and Mr. Castro.*

Unlike Attorney General Janet Reno, I cannot tell what road the father would have taken had he had been free, not just on free soil

Communists, when agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation contacted a Communist they wore suits, and were unfailingly polite. Contrast this with men in military gear kicking in the door — Donato Dalrymple says that they did not knock — and screaming curses and threats to kill the inhabitants of the house.

If the government truly believed that there was any danger for the agents, it was grossly irresponsible to go forward with the plan, since it would also endanger the boy. From this alone, one might conclude that they did not, in fact, believe that this force was necessary. Why, then, was it used?

Some speculate that it was to intimidate the rest of us. In any case, it was done with reckless disregard of the safety of the little boy.

I have seen an e-mail, sent by one of the originators of special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams. Since it was not sent to me, I will not use his name. He said that he would have had his men in suits (with body armor underneath) with pistols (concealed, not deployed for use) and would have politely knocked on the door. His comment on the use of the balaclavas was that anyone who has to hide his face when he goes to get a child probably knows that what he is doing is wrong.

Let me review, briefly, where this stands. Juan Miguel claims to be Elián's father, although there has been no DNA testing — try to collect child support for a single mother without a DNA test. We have only the word of an official in the Communist government of Cuba, in the form of a birth certificate issued after the rescue of Elián. No law required the transfer of Elián to Juan Miguel, even if he is the father. There was no court order for the transfer, and two days before the raid a Federal Circuit Court refused to issue such an order. Individuals who had been asked by the government to negotiate believed that a resolution was near. Experts in SWAT tactics say that the force used was excessive and dangerous. In the end, we must conclude that this was done merely because Clinton wanted it done.

For seven years we have watched them. They took FBI files on Reagan and Bush appointees, and got away with it. They attempted to frame Billy Dale, from the White House travel office, not because they believed that he had done anything wrong, but by trying to frame him they thought we would not notice when they put their own people in his place. We have listened to endless lies and

coverups. This is where it has led us. We have a government that does as it pleases, arbitrarily and capriciously, without reference to any law or any concept of justice.

The Roman Republic was founded in 507 B.C., with the overthrow of the monarchy of Tarquinius. Tarquinius had usurped the throne from the rightful king, and his reign was marked by corruption, cruelty, and despotic rule. While the establishment of the Republic corrected many of the abuses of the monarchy, many abuses and injustices continued. The chief source of injustice, and of the grievances of the common people, or "Plebeians," was the fact that the law was the traditional law of the ruling class, the "Patricians," it was administered by Patricians, and it was not written. Accordingly, Plebeians were judged according to a law which they did not understand, and whose application, to any given set of facts, could not be predicted.

In response to the perception that an unknown law was necessarily unjust, the Roman Tribune, Gaius Terentilius Harsa, proposed a reform which would require the law to be codified and reduced to writing. The motion failed, but 11 years later a committee of 10 was appointed to do as Terentilius proposed. This committee, called the "Decemvirate," did not complete the task within the two years they were given, so a second Decemvirate was appointed to complete the task. The second Decemvirate, when they had finished their work, wrote the legal code on 12 columns which were erected in the forum. From what we can learn of the Twelve Tables, they were primarily concerned with legal procedure. With the erection of the Twelve Tables, a Roman could know in advance the law he was expected to live by, and the procedure by which he would be judged if he were accused under the law.

Ironically, the second Decemvirate, assigned to give the Roman people fixed laws under which they could expect just government, attempted to usurp the powers of the state and make their offices permanent, leading to a second revolution, this time to overthrow the decemvirate, rather than the monarchy.

The lesson of history is that a people should remain intolerant of any abuse of power. If a demagogue learns that he can get away with an abuse of power, he will commit further abuses. And sometimes, as we learn from the second Decemvirate, they will seek to protect their despotism by calling it "the rule of law." ✖

— or what forms of hell Juan Gonzales' mother and other relatives would have been put through in Cuba. Miss Reno said she could tell, by looking into his eyes, that he spoke the truth. She could save us big money in trial costs if she flew about looking into eyes, instead of going through that boring due-process nonsense ...

... As for those Americans and others who use the boy to display their unlimited compassion for Fidel, who never use his own word "communist" to describe his regime but select one more delicate — such as "socialist" — and who ask how do we know our society is really better for children than Fidel's dictatorship, let me tell these people in all courtesy: You make me sick to my stomach.

In an op-ed piece in the *Colorado Daily*, former Libertarian candidate for the Senate David Segal observed: When Clinton's jackbooted thugs broke into the house of Lazaro Gonzales in Miami and kidnapped his grand-nephew, Elián, most people were so caught up in the inherent drama of the situation that they failed to notice that the executive branch of the federal government effectively staged a coup d'etat, setting aside due process, judicial authority and the Constitution itself ...

... April 22, 2000, marks the day that America's system of "checks and balances" finally collapsed: the day the executive branch finally asserted its supreme authority and made it stick; the day the American republic became a republic in name only.

And columnist Vin Suprynowicz editorialized: And so the Clinton administration, which began its term using tanks to knock down the walls an staircases of a plywood church in Texas ... has

decided to go out in similar style, staging a violent and unnecessary pre-dawn raid by a massed force of bounding overweight paramilitary goons armed with German submachine guns, in order to "show who's boss" in the matter of a 6-year-old Cuban refugee.

This is the administration which wants to take all defensive arms away from us law-abiding peasants, mind you, since "guns never solve anything." Yet when faced with even a momentary frustration in the courts (no, Elián's Florida relatives had not violated any court order to turn over the kid. In fact, it was Attorney General Janet Reno who went to court a few days before her daredevil raid, seeking a custody order, and was specifically turned down), the Clinton's revert to the old ways — MP-5 machine guns in the dawn. Unless Lon Horiuchi is available, of course.

Ms. Reno then went on TV, telling us what a wonderful thing TV is that we can all see the kid was never in danger — the gunman's finger was indexed along the receiver, not actually in the trigger guard.

Hey, good one. Actually, we couldn't see what happened inside the house on TV, Ms. Reno, because your goons slammed the pool cameraman, NBC's Tony Zumbado, in the forehead with their gun butts and stomped him so badly he had to be hospitalized ...

Ms. Reno said her agents had to use force because the Cuban-Americans outside the house resisted the raid, "throwing ropes" around her agents. This bizarre statement led to a correction from the Justice Department a few hours later — no ropes, it turns out, the agents merely kept tripping over Mr. Zumbado's trailing video cables after they beat him to the ground ...

omegaPROVINGground

Ciener Glock .22 Long Rifle Conversion Kit

The .22 rimfire, specifically the .22 Long Rifle cartridge, is not a fighting cartridge by any stretch of the imagination, but the importance of this round can not be overemphasized even for military and law-enforcement personnel. The predecessor of the .22 Long Rifle cartridge was the .22 Short introduced by Smith & Wesson in 1856 when they offered a small tip-up revolver chambered for this, the first self-contained cartridge. The startling thing about all this firearms lore is the fact Smith & Wesson made their reputation selling these small revolvers in .22 Short caliber to combatants serving the North for use as weapons of personal self-

defense during the American Civil War.

No one with even the minimum knowledge of terminal ballistics would recommend any .22 rimfire handgun for self-defense, but does that mean pistols chambered for this universally produced round are meaningless and without value? Of course not.

For training new shooters with little or no firearms experience nothing beats the low report, mild recoiling, inexpensive .22 Long Rifle cartridge and this is exactly where Jonathan Arthur Ciener has stepped in with his high quality .22 Long Rifle conversion kits (Dept. SOF, Jonathan Arthur Ciener, Inc., 8700 Commerce Street,



Jonathan Arthur Ciener is now producing a .22 Long Rifle conversion kit of the most successful and most popular series of pistols from the past two decades — the Glock. Shown here is the conversion kit mounted on a Glock 23.

(right) The Ciener Glock conversion kit was not meant to be a match-grade conversion in terms of accuracy but seen is the group the author shot at a distance of 20 yards with all 10 rounds in the magazine. Also shown here is the hard plastic box containing each kit as well as the recommended Remington High Velocity, solid-nose, .22 Long Rifle ammunition. (inset) The Glock sub-caliber conversion kit from Ciener consists of a slide, a barrel chambered in .22 Long Rifle caliber, a recoil spring and guiderod assembly and one 10 round magazine. The units designed for the Model 19 and Model 23 Glock pistols work equally well on either gun as it is shown here mounted on a Glock 23.



The sights mimic those found on a standard Glock in shape and profile but there is no white outline or front sight dot. The rear blade has a square-cut notch and a substantial blade. The front sight is the same triangular pyramid shape found on the factory Glock pistols. Unfortunately, there is no adjustment in terms of windage or elevation as both the front and rear sights are milled as part of the slide. If adjustment in point of impact is necessary, then Kentucky windage (and elevation hold-over or under) becomes the order of the day.

In personal conversations with Ciener, he has never claimed match-grade accuracy for these units, but we found if we focused on the job at hand, paying attention to sights and trigger squeeze, we could keep five rounds inside an inch at 50 feet.

The major components of this conversion kit are manufactured from high-quality, high-strength aluminum alloys. The 10-round magazine is easily disassembled for cleaning and cleaning of the entire unit is recommended to guarantee consistent performance.

The magazine on the test unit was not a "fall-free," but rather a snug-fitting design. For the purposes of training new shooters or recreational plinking this is not a matter of great concern. If anything, having to pull the magazine from the grip should prevent the ingestion of sand, dirt and other debris when it isn't accidentally dropped on the range. There is no last round "hold-open" provision on the Ciener conversion kit, but again for the basic mission statement of teaching a new shooter firearms safety and marksmanship this is a non-essential requirement.

However, the basic manual of arms remains the same with the Ciener Glock conversion unit and installation is easy. Simply remove the centerfire magazine and slide assembly from the frame and re-install the subcaliber conversion slide. Load 10 rounds in the magazine, insert, pull the slide back and chamber. You are now good to go. The gun functioned reliably in our testing with only an occasional misfire.

The beauty of this system can be seen at a couple of levels. First: A rimfire Glock is now available when Glock doesn't even build a .22 Long Rifle model. Secondly, Ciener has two kits available; one for the Model 19 and Model 23 Glocks pistols and the second for the Glock 17 and Glock 22 pistols. The ability of these kits to fit both 9mm and .40 caliber guns makes them even more attractive, but the main advantage remains the ability to practice, if only informally, with low-cost, low-recoiling, low-report ammunition with your Glock self-defense pistol.

Everyone who owns a gun should have at least one gun chambered for a rimfire cartridge. Now, every Glock owner need only own one gun to have both a centerfire and rimfire pistol. This gives deeper meaning to the old phrase, "Beware of the Man Who Owns Only One Gun."
— Frank W. James

Cape Canaveral, FL 32920; phone: 407-868-2200).

Ciener's first .22 Long Rifle conversion kits were for the Ruger Mini-14 and AR-15/M-16 series of rifles. Next, he focused on handguns and built conversion units for the 1911 series of pistols. These were followed by the conversion kits he released for the Beretta Model 92 & 96 pistols and for the similar pistols from Taurus, but none of these kits will have the impact of his most recent introduction.

Jonathan Arthur Ciener is now producing a .22 Long Rifle conversion kit for the most successful and most popular series of pistols from the past two decades — the Glock.

The Glock sub-caliber conversion kit consists of a slide, a barrel chambered in .22 Long Rifle caliber, a recoil spring and guiderod assembly and one 10-round magazine in a fitted hard plastic case. The Ciener .22 caliber conversion for the Glock pistol is a blow-back operated, sub-caliber conversion device that permits semi-automatic firing of .22 Long Rifle ammunition in specified models of Glock pistols. For our testing, we received a conversion kit for the Glock Model 19 or Model 23 pistols as the same unit serves both pistols. Just to check we installed this conversion unit on both a Glock 19 and later a Glock 23 and discovered it worked well on either pistol.

Ciener recommends premium grade .22 Long Rifle high-velocity, round-nose ammunition be used in this conversion unit. He test fires each unit at the factory with Remington High Velocity solid nose ammunition and recommends the same ammo for use with the Glock kits. This is understandable when you consider the dynamics at play in his conversion kit because of the striker fired Glock mechanism. Essentially in designing this conversion Ciener had to find a balance point between the spring pressure of the recoil & guide rod assembly versus the striker spring as each spring was pushing against the other in this unlocked blowback operated action.

To complicate the issue is the fact the .22 Long Rifle round is probably manufactured by more companies in more countries than any other round of ammunition in the world. And the differences between these manufactured rounds, some great, some small but still significant, in primer brisance and case dimensions are mind boggling at best, so we tested the unit with the recommended Remington High Velocity solid nose ammunition.

McCann Puffin Magnum

It hardly begs mention that advances in materials technology have been the enabling factor in the advance of industry. Creativity and artisanship always seemed to run ahead of available materials technology, so were ready to adopt advances in materials as they appeared on the scene, without missing a beat. This adaptive use of new materials in the creation of new designs has especially facilitated advances in the fields of modern small arms and modern cutlery.

Now, having made the requisite bow to progress, this writer will risk exposure as the staff dinosaur with the admission we have always favored guns and knives — and other tools — appropriately designed and skillfully made of magnificent wood and beautifully wrought high-carbon steel.

And, the weirdness does not end there, as to these eyes and hands, a really good and beautiful knife/gun/tool takes on a heightened esthetic after years of use. A lot of the junk made today might also get more lovely with the passing of time, but, alas, we will never know because it seldom endures past the first job or season.

If you share these anachronistic afflictions, do we have good news for you: There is at least one maker who retains the esthetic of carbon steel wed to beautiful wood, and still avails the very leading edge of materials and manufacturing technology for the most demanding field applications.

One of the people we met at the SHOTshow this year was a Northwest renaissance man named Richard McCann. Renaissance dude in that Richard builds rifles, pistols, stoves, knives, scope mounts, .338 Garand conversions, custom aftermarket parts, and for all we know bakes wedding cakes at night — all with an eye for the esthetic and function in design, and passion for precision in the building, that is not only rare these days, it is as refreshing as an August wind off Puget Sound.

In the editorial works, we have a review of their .308 MAS 49-56 rifle conversion (watch for it!), but the item at hand this issue is their Puffin Magnum, which they modestly describe as “a very robust general purpose field knife.” Modest, but accurate: “very robust” in that its thick, full-tang blade wouldn’t break if you used it to change truck tires or pry stones from the Temple of Doom, and “general-purpose” in that it will do whatever you conceivably would want a hard-use a belt knife to do.

Those who have never made a knife might not appreciate how many details there are to getting it right, and the Puffin Magnum is awash with details McCann didn’t merely get “right” but got better than we have ever seen. In a device as schematically “simple” as a knife, the slightest nuance of form will invariably effect function, and there’s not a detail on the Puffin Magnum this user would change by a whisker. A whisker, incidentally, is 30 times thicker than the one ten-thousandths of an inch dimensional standard to which McCann forms these knives on CNC machinery.

Take, for example, the way McCann attaches the grip scales: I like full-tang construction for its strength, but this means you have to securely attach the grips to the tang. Most makers use rivets or adhesives. Some use rivets and adhesives. Others expend the extra effort and tap the tang and use flathead screws through the scales — but if the threads ever strip you can look to the joy of bugging a series of drills and taps as you ream the hole in the heat-treated tang and thread it the next size up.

In keeping with his take-no-prisoners philosophy of making it as good as it can get, McCann used inletted, socket-head cap screws to hold the scales, which mate to replaceable threaded bushings in the tang. This gives the user the option of removing the scales for routine cleaning (as in: gut a bear in the morning, slice tomatoes for salad in the evening, you’d best get it squeaky clean in between), or



if you ever get careless and strip a thread you can replace the bushing and be good to go without refitting the thread and messing up the grip scales for the next-up screw. A small detail, but one of the features that will endear this knife to you over the lifetime of use you can expect to get from it.

As to form, I think the operative technical term here is *just right*. This 16-ounce knife is of ample (12.75” overall, 6.5” blade) proportions and slightly point-heavy. This gives it the heft and hang to be a good chopper whether for stakes and poles, beheading small game, or working through the large joints on an elk. In silhouette, one first notices that the slightly recurved blade has a pronounced belly and hangs just about knuckle-thick below the grips. This will be appreciated when dressing or butchering game such as bear or bovines which can carry diseases common to man, as it keeps the back of the fingers above the cutting edge when maneuvering past shattered and sharp bones, etc.

The dropped point has a precise false edge, which could readily be brought to sharp if your work patterns require it. The recurved shape of the blade gives a good deal of belly to the front part of the blade, resulting in a wide radius that is just right for skinning large game or slicing everything from tomatoes to thin breakfast steaks. There is an extension of the tang drilled for a lanyard: This is a very good idea for those who work over or under water, jump, or otherwise are wont to drop tools — this is one knife whose loss you would truly grieve.

Richard warned me the blade came sharp, as he had sharpened it on a CNC machine. [Yeah, right, I thought, sharpening a knife on a mill ...] The blade was truly sharp, and, under a ‘scope you can see it was indeed milled to a nothing edge. The reason he does this is not merely because he can, but because it enables him to give the very edge a *precise* hollow-ground shape. Regards the steel in the blade, it is good, it is strong and properly heat treated, and there is plenty of it. Since the knife is designed to be a good chopper, I abused the edge on some hard, dry wood (Russian olive), and there was no deformation (indicating softness) nor chipping (indicating over hardening). It would still slice tomatoes.

Since the blade is made of a high-carbon steel, for ease in cleaning, rust protection and stealth in a tactical application, it comes with a truly tough polymer finish. The Puffin Magnum comes in a very well designed and built Kydex sheath, featuring an excellent and adjustable belt attachment that suits them all from a thin leather belt to a web duty belt.

The overall esthetic is excellent, even better in the hand than in a photo. Grip scales are available in precisely sculpted linen micarta or exotic woods. Wood and steel? We opted for wood, and the comfortable, oil-finished scales were as precise as anything I’ve ever seen made from wood. All scales have the same contour, and it is excellent, with a comfortable palm swell just where you want it for a secure grip.

The McCann Puffin Magnum is indeed a “very robust general-purpose field knife.” It is a tool of the first order, or in the hands of one sufficiently trained or sufficiently desperate, a weapon that will not let you down.

Contact McCann Industries, Dept. SOF, 132 South 162nd, Spanaway, WA 98387; phone: 253-537-6919; fax: 253-537-6993.

— Don McLean ✕

Two's Company, Three's A Crowd

Have Third Party Candidates Hurt The Cause?

by JUNIUS



Pat Buchanan is a friend of mine, and I agree with many of his views. However, a third party has often harmed the very issues for which the supporters were moved to vote for that party in the first place.

In the upcoming presidential election, as has often happened in the past, many of you will be tempted to vote for a third party. I understand. Pat Buchanan is a friend of mine, and I agree with many of his views. However, a third party has often harmed the very issues for which the supporters were moved to vote for the third party in the first place. Let me give some examples.

Following the end of the Civil War, the nation enjoyed a prolonged period of rapid economic expansion, fueled by industrial progress, improved transportation, and the influx of immigrants from Europe. This period, however, was also marked by frequent financial panics caused by the inflexible supply of money. We were on the gold standard and the money supply could not keep up with the expansion. This led to severe deflation. For borrowers, deflation creates serious hardship. In 1876 the nation was recovering from one such economic depression. Both the Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes, and the Democrat, Samuel Tilden, favored "sound money" (i.e. gold). This led to the formation of the Greenback Party which favored a mild inflation which would relieve poor farmers. The Greenbacks received less than 1% of the vote, but they were votes which, for the most part, would have gone to Tilden. As a result, Tilden got a majority of the popular vote, but lost in the electoral college by 185 to 184. Some scholars believe that the votes of the Greenback Party would have given the edge to Tilden. As it was, the South was so enraged at the manner in which the election was conducted that it voted Democrat for nearly 100 years thereafter (the "Solid South").

In 1880, James A. Garfield defeated for-



Ross Perot addresses the Reform Party National Convention in 1999. Regardless of the temptation to vote for a third party, that voter never succeeds. Instead, a vote for a third party can make things worse for decades to come.

mer National Rifle Association president, Winfield Scott Hancock. However, the Greenback Party, most of whose votes would have gone to Hancock, took away enough votes from Hancock to elect Garfield.

In 1908 Theodore Roosevelt, following the precedent set by Washington, declined to run for a third term, although he would, almost surely, have been re-elected. Instead, he nominated his hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft. Shortly after Taft took office, however, one of Roosevelt's last acts was rescinded by Interior Secretary Richard Ballinger. The Chief U.S. Forester, Gifford Pinchot, disputed the wisdom of Ballinger's act, and Roosevelt took Pinchot's side. This incident led to a widening breach between Roosevelt and Taft. When Roosevelt was denied the nomination of the Republican Party in 1912, he formed the Progressive Party. As with all third party campaigns, Roosevelt lost. However, his campaign gave the election to the priggish former professor, Woodrow Wilson, the worst president in American history. Among other injuries which he inflicted upon the Republic was the continuing erosion of American sovereignty to an unelected international body which is not restrained by our Constitution. He also gave us the concept of the "living Constitution," which permits judges to interpret the Constitution as they please, rather than as it was written by the founders. While he was President the income tax and the Federal Reserve Bank came into existence.



Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, now of the Reform Party, flirted with a presidential run. There was never more potential for things to get worse than right now. If Al Gore wins, what do you think he will do to gun owners? How will the federal government act toward critics?

In 1917 he presided over our entry into the First World War, although this was bitterly opposed by fellow Democrat William Jennings Bryan. When America entered the War the Imperial German government realized that it had to win the war in the West before American troops could make the difference. Therefore, they smuggled Lenin into Russia in order to stage his coup (the "October Revolution"). Although Lenin made peace with the Germans, it was too late, the Imperial German forces were defeated, and the Hohenzollern Dynasty was overthrown. The bitterness of the defeat led to the accession of the National Socialist Government of Adolph Hitler in 1933, and to the Second World War.

I hope that I have made my point. Regardless of the temptation to vote for a third party, the third party voter never succeeds. Instead, a vote for a third party can make things worse for decades to come. And there was never more potential for things to get worse than right now. If Al Gore wins, what do you think he will do to gun owners? How will the federal government act toward critics? Elsewhere in this issue I discuss the invasion of the home of Lazaro Gonzales in Miami, to seize little Elian Gonzales. If the Gore-Clinton team will do this to a little boy, what are they prepared to do to us and our Constitution?

Please, no matter how tempting it may seem, don't vote for a third party this year. Register, persuade your friends to register, volunteer in the campaign, and save America by voting for George W. Bush. ✕

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KA-BAR was there

Full Auto

Continued from page 24

it, I was unable to fire more than a single shot at a time through my specimen. Fortunately, through the efforts almost exclusively of my close friend, Kent A. Lomont, the country's most prominent Class 3 dealer, procedures were devised to successfully fire the Marlin U.S. Navy Mark V Model 1917 caliber .30-06 machine gun. With the faint hope that there might be other Marlin Mark V machine guns out there, sitting dormant, and to record this information for posterity, the following are the loading procedures and techniques required to get this odd duck quacking.

1) Cycle the gun several times. Make sure all of the cocking handle screws are tight. They loosen frequently on the Marlin-Rockwell aircraft guns as well.

2) With the bolt forward, place a loaded belt into the gun from the left side. While pulling on the belt with *very little* force, pull the cocking handle to the rear and snap it forward. This places one round into the first cog of the feed wheel.

3) Retract the cocking handle fully rearward and hang it in the rearward position. Then tap the cocking handle and let it fly forward — *not* under control.

4) Look into the action from the right side. The cartridge extractor (that is the one that pulls a round from the belt) should be hooked into the cartridge case's extractor groove.

5) Important: Cock the gun all the way to the rear and once again hang it in that position. *Make sure that a cartridge is all the way rearward on top of the "carrier dog."* If it's not, push it back manually with a pencil or small drift. Otherwise, in total certainty as it moves forward the projectile will become deformed and will not chamber.

6) Tap the cocking handle and let it fly freely forward. Once again, inspect the action from the right side and make certain the bolt is locked (i.e., tilted down at the rear) and also make certain the cartridge extractor is once more in the extractor groove of the next round.

The gun should now be ready to fire. There is an illustration in the government report of the Mark V machine gun on a naval pedestal mount of some type. The integral bronze belt guide on the standard Potato Digger ground mount slightly interferes with the belt port on the left side of the Mark V's receiver and it's quite apparent it was never intended to be fired off this tripod. As a consequence, make sure the "A" gunner feeds the belt straight inward. In addition, the cloth belts now available seem to be a bit too wide and allowing them to feed in any position other than straight inward will inevitably result in a jam.

Well, there you have it. Everything you never really wanted to know about the Marlin-Rockwell U.S. Navy Mark V Model 1917 machine gun and weren't about to ask me or anyone else. Just be grateful you never had to field this fiasco in combat. ☒

Your Enemies Are Real

Continued from page 47

rity by taking two strangers to Mourad's house. When Mourad found out Roger would be dead, and we probably be rendered blind and mute as a warning.

Things weren't looking good. We drove over to the SLA's command center, passing a convoy of armored Mercedes Benz sedans packed with Israeli soldiers on their way north. Each of the three cars sported boxes of fruit on their roofs to hide an antenna array used as electronic counter measures to set off roadside bombs planted by Hezbollah.

Everyone in southern Lebanon took the roadside bomb threat with deadly seriousness. IDF engineers had recently put up a 3-foot-tall concrete barrier stretching the entire length of Marjayoun's main street because of a spate of Hezbollah kamikaze drivers who, upon spotting SLA or IDF convoys, would swerve their cars into the oncoming lane and then detonate their deadly cargo.

Raymond Abu Mourad greeted us in the corner office he occupied on the second floor of a nondescript building in the center of the SLA-IDF command center in Marjayoun.

Mourad became the SLA's second-in-command last year when the then-second in command under the SLA's senior commander Antuan Lahed was killed in a roadside bomb attack.

We asked Mourad if we could visit some SLA checkpoints or speak with some SLA soldiers about the upcoming IDF withdrawal.

"That would be impossible," Mourad answered, still smiling. "It's not allowed. However, you know that I can't stop you from doing what you want. But your driver and Roger have to live here, and if you did something wrong they would be responsible."

We knew a threat when we heard one, but decided to keep our mouths shut and press on further with our questions.

We then asked Mourad what he thought the future held for the SLA.

"I don't know," Mourad said. "Peace is good. We want peace. I don't think that I will have any problems with Hezbollah after the Israelis leave."

We knew that Mourad was lying through his teeth, and that Hezbollah had a price on his head. The last Israeli soldier would barely have his foot over the border before Hezbollah would have wiped Mourad off the face of the planet.

Mourad and the SLA's future looked bleak.

The last word *SOF* had on the SLA was that the Israeli government had denied the command staff's blanket request for asylum. May might indeed be a long, hot, bloody month in the Middle East.

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Killing Fields

Continued from page 61

Vietnamese. Vietnam had humiliated Cambodia with its territorial aggression over two centuries, and in the revolutionary struggles against the Cambodian governments and the U.S., the Vietnamese communist leaders had acted toward the Cambodian communists like wiser "elder brothers." The traditional resentments most Cambodians felt towards the Vietnamese had been transmuted by Marxist-Leninist political culture into the Khmer Rouge's quest for ideological purity. The Cambodian leaders were aided not by ordinary peasants radicalized by U.S. bombing, but by ethnic minorities from the north-eastern hills and back-country types from the remote southwest who resented the better-off lowland Cambodians and urban dwellers.

All this leads to a conclusion that the Khmer Rouge movement was an extreme form of communism, defined by its leadership in reaction to their perverted cultural ambitions. The crimes of the Khmer Rouge were primarily the responsibility of the Khmer Rouge. The principal foreign accomplices of the Khmer Rouge in these crimes didn't include the Nixon administration, which tried to prevent the revolutionaries from gaining power. Among the foreign nations who were accomplices, primary responsibility lies with the governments of China and Vietnam.

Secondary Culpability

But we must not forget that a communist victory in Cambodia, as much as in Laos and Vietnam, had always been the wish of the leaders of the American antiwar movement. In congressional hearings that took place in February and March, 1975 on supplemental assistance to the Cambodian government, lobbyist Tom Hayden (now a California state senator) and Cornell professor George Kahin spoke optimistically of Cambodia's future after the war and approved of the educational credentials of the Cambodian communist leaders.

So perhaps one could find a place in the realm of secondary culpability for those Western journalists who failed to report on Khmer Rouge atrocities even when the evidence was abundant. And perhaps also for those antiwar lobbyists and congressmen who opposed American aid to the Cambodian government before 1975. Certainly we can attribute some culpability to those Western academics who, after 1975, denied that the Khmer Rouge holocaust was taking place. It was, after all, these warriors in the political and cultural domain who made effective Western resistance to the Khmer Rouge impossible.

Mr. Morris is a fellow at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University and author of Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia (Stanford University Press, 1999).

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Company Commander

Continued from page 60

untouchable behind the crest of the bluff.

Once our mortars and machine guns were safely across, we set up a similar covering fire on the opposite bank for the tail-end folks from the company bringing up the rear on our crossing. In the best John Wayne-fashion, I volunteered to be the last man across. With all hands safely on the other side, I ceremoniously untied the rappelling line on my side of the river and started to wade in. I had my helmet in my right hand — and the incompetent sniper got his first and only hit of the afternoon as he ricocheted a round off the helmet in my right hand!

Lesson: Never volunteer to be the last guy across the river if the guy taking pot shots is learning as he goes.

Wiping Egg From One's Face

Once we were safely across the river and making our way down a road on top of a rice paddy dike, we had begun to breath a sigh of relief. Apparently our tormentor had given up and stopped firing at us. But then a blast of machine-gun fire from the bluff told me our sniper had brought in reinforcements. The entire company hit the deck behind the protection of the paddy dike. Now the s.o.b. was playing *my* game. I yelled for my radio operator to give me the handset so I could bring in a gunship on this pesky clown. Fire continued to sweep across my position and I was cursing the gent who had designed the Jungle Utility Jacket for making the buttons too thick. I called for the radio again. Suddenly a voice from above said:

"Here ya go, Skipper, who do you wanna' call?"

Above me? A glance upward revealed that the entire company was in the process of climbing out from behind the dike and dusting themselves off! Looking around I saw the situation a bit more clearly! While the first burst came from the bad guys from the bluff — the subsequent bursts had been from my own M60s returning fire causing the enemy gunner to flee. I crawled out of my position behind the dike and got to my feet with a bright red face. I covered my embarrassment with a statement to the effect that I was gonna compliment our gunners for getting the M60s in action so fast. The troops all kept straight faces, and there wasn't even one snicker! I could have kissed 'em.

Lesson: Get your head up far enough to evaluate the situation and have a good cover story. The alternative is to have an excellent Rifle Company that doesn't laugh at the CO when he does dumb things!

Major Dick Culver is the founder and first instructor of the USMC Sniper Instructor School, in Quantico, Va. His web site is <http://www.jouster.com>.

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Freetown Free-Lancers

Continued from page 57

strike was planned for early the next day; the chopper boys would provide coordinates with their Global Positioning Satellite system and the jets would come in, as usual, from 5,000 feet.

Then, recounted Walker, followed one of the remarkable events of the war. It involved Nigerian pilots who had been trained by the British, flying German aircraft that had been armed with French munitions, coupled with an operation that involved South Africans flying Russian helicopters providing the Forward Air Control (FAC). Their targets were groups of Sierra Leone rebels that had originally come from Liberia.

On the morning of the proposed strike, the cloud ceiling was down to about 400 feet. According to Walker it was the usual thick, impenetrable tropical mess that tended to ground most flights for the day. The Nigerians wanted to cancel. Walker and Alberts flew to Lungi to talk to them at their base.

The South Africans suggested that they launch anyway. They would go ahead in the Mi-24 and pin-point the target area for the jets. Throughout, they suggested, they would remain visual just below cloud cover.

"Hare-Brained" Scheme

The objective was to talk the Alphas in

at tree-top level and, at the right moment, give the signal to let go with the heavy stuff. The Nigerians were incredulous. They thought the scheme hare-brained and said so. Anyway, their leader declared, they had never done anything like this before. And tree-top flying? No way!

There was another problem. The Nigerian squadron leader said the cluster bombs they were armed with were expensive. They had only about six or eight left and weren't keen to waste them. It was just not on, he declared firmly and it should have been end of discussion.

"You won't be wasting them," Walker argued. "Trust us. We'll get you down the throat of the rebels. Just aim straight for and below us and we'll coordinate the whole thing," he suggested. Anyway, Walker added, he had done it many times before in Angola and it always worked. Finally, with reluctance, the Nigerians agreed. The Mi-24 set out. Using their GPS, Walker and Alberts headed straight for the camp. They took up the required position and called in the Alphas, giving them a two-minute IP point for reference.

The Nigerians, following up close and heading towards the target at tree-top height at 450 knots then did the unthinkable. "It was something quite unique and it's good that they went through with it because they didn't really have to," Walker recalls.

"They had their own peculiar flight language; terribly British! I could hear them

clearly after I had told them to standby to drop: 'Pickle ... pickle ... pickle ... NOW!' And they dropped their loads!"

The Alphas were spot on. The French cluster bombs they used were state-of-the-art. The blasts cleared the jungle of its foliage and completely exposed what had been an enemy camp over an area roughly the size of several football fields.

"Trouble is, we only found out later, the enemy had fled. They had been tipped off from Freetown — which was a problem that we had to live with for the duration of the war. The gooks had left the area long before we got there, but we didn't know that until afterwards: Because of the foliage, we couldn't see that the place was deserted. They left behind a tiny squad armed with RPGs and they gave us a couple of sticks before the cluster bombs killed them."

Mission having been accomplished, the South Africans radioed the Nigerians to circle the target area for an up-close of their handiwork. The jets made a wide arc. Later, during the debrief, they admitted that the tactic really did have value and was worth incorporating into future battle plans. Then they promptly did it again a couple of weeks later.

Al Venter is a senior SOF correspondent. See the sequel to this story in the September issue, coming soon to a newsstand near you. ✕

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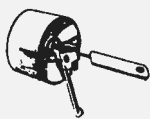
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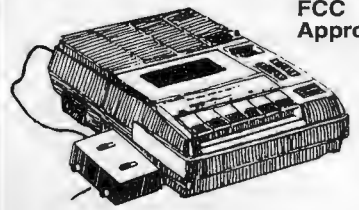
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The 25th anniversary of the fall of South Vietnam was like a slow-moving, thousand-mile-long funeral procession. The media relentlessly barraged us with worn memories. The tube, magazines and newspapers picked at the scars of the war until they got down to the bloodless bone.

Rarely was anything substantial covered.

The tempo picked up after the Cuban kid, perhaps the last tragic captive of the Cold War, was returned to his Commie dad and as we drew closer to the anniversary of the day the Soviet tanks manned by North Viets wheezed and rattled their way into Saigon.

For the past couple of weeks the war's been dissected, resected and intersected.

Once again the guilty were nailed to the cross and the flawed strategies reshaped. The Black Wall was shot from every TV angle, along with the mourners gathered there — the amateurs with their cameras and the Old Guard professionals dressed in their standard, now-very-tired camouflage gear and beribboned hats.

Strangely, in all this dark deliberation, precious little has been said about the grunts who fought in Vietnam. You remember them, the kids who were sent there to be cannon fodder, so badly trained and with hardly a clue about the purpose of the conflict. You know, the 18- and 19-year-olds who toted the Black Stick, the M16 rifle, the worst infantry weapon ever placed in an American soldier's hands. A favorite, of course, of the racketeers in Washington who I'm sure bought Colt Industries low and sold high oh-so patriotically.

The average Viet vet's age today is 52. Many still carry a hangover from "The Vietnam Experience." When they got home, their dads from the "Greatest Generation" — who'd won The Big War — called them slackers who didn't fight hard enough. "Or," the vets of Anzio and Saipan said, "They would have won."

Since most other folks gave our boys the same short shrift, they never were really allowed to talk about — to process — what happened to them.

For the grunts, Vietnam was one of America's toughest infantry fights. In their fathers' war, few groundpounders clocked up the frontline combat days like the Vietnam vets. The U.S. Army's 3d Infantry Division, which fought from Africa to



Col. David Hackworth (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.

Czechoslovakia, had the record for more combat grunt time than any other U.S. foot-slogging outfit in World War II. Total line days: about 350. The average Viet grunt clocked 365 line days, unless he went out early by litter or bodybag.

In their dads' war, there were tidy fronts, reserve time, breathing space between invasions and the old "Two up and one back" tactic. In Vietnam, there was no reserve time, no fronts, no rest time, just the endless pounding over some of the worst terrain our infantry has ever slogged through. And every unit was fully committed — there was no "Two up and one back." The generals had to have their high body counts and their follow-on promotions.

True, the Germans and Japanese were worthy foes. But the Viet infantry was as hard core as the Japanese and as professional at war as the Germans. And the Viets knew how to strike from the shadows. They were everywhere and nowhere, not easy to I.D. The old man who cut the troops' hair was really a Viet Cong colonel. The pretty girl on the side of the road selling Cokes spied for the Viet Cong — and also set out mines at night.

The mines and booby traps were ever-present. They were wall-to-wall, ranging from a Coke can wrapped with barbwire and filled with C-4, to a dud 500-pound

U.S. bomb rigged with a tripwire. Thirty percent of U.S. casualties came from these evil devices. Every time a grunt put down a foot, he didn't know if he'd have a leg or a life when his boot hit the dirt. Try doing that for 365 days and see what it does to your head.

For sure, there will be another of these funeral dirges in another five years to mark the 30th anniversary of a war we had no business fighting. Maybe then the press will honor the unsung heroes of Vietnam and finally welcome them home.

An act that might allow these brave vets to heal at last.

<http://www.hackworth.com> is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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Hackworth's new book, a novel, *The Price of Honor*, is now available. ✕

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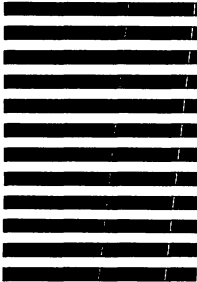
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